UDAYAGIRI: A SACRED HILL

ITS

ART, ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE

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I CONFIRM THAT THE WORK SUBMITTED IS MY OWN AND THAT APPROPRIATE CREDIT HAS BEEN GIVEN WHERE REFERENCE HAS BEEN MADE TO THE WORKS OF OTHERS.

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SEPTEMBER 2001.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study has been to recover the fifth century cave-temple site of Udayagiri. Unlike the previous studies that have focused on iconography, epigraphy, architecture, rock paintings and pictoglyphs as independent subjects, I have adopted a holistic approach. The aim was to understand the relationship of the above mentioned elements which share and constitute this sacred landscape.

My study has shown that the development of this site was undertaken in one campaign under the patronage of the mighty Gupta king Candragupta Vikramāditya II who was accompanied by his minister Vīrasena. This campaign was religious in its nature, political in its objective and astronomical in its application. The success of the campaign was achieved by using a powerfully conceived Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva iconography magnified and purified by Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The holy rivers were introduced not just as relief representations but as actual water that fell in cascades and collected in a large ocean-like tank. The political aim of this manipulation of several media was to project an image of the king as the mighty Trīvikrama who placed his foot on a mountain consecrated by holy rivers and the permanent presence of great gods. Both the king and the gods inhabited a universe defined by time, a time which stretched from single days and months to eons and recurrent *kalpas*. This time was defined by the movement of the sun, planets and stars across the heavens and whose courses had been charted from Udayagiri by ancient star-gazers even before the advent of the Guptas.

The setting of Viṣṇu's foot (*pada*) on the hill (*giri*) was not just a mythical fancy. Rather, my study shows that the hill could have been the Viṣṇupadagiri mentioned in the inscription on the Iron Pillar now in Delhi. The presence of the Iron Pillar at Udayagiri and the facts which support this association, constitute one of the key arguments of this thesis.

The possibility of a pre-Gupta Sun temple on this hill is suggested in my study. Significantly the site falls on the Tropic of Cancer and this may have been the factor that governed the position of the temple and the layout of caves and other structures. All may have had astronomical significance. All aspects of the site functioned in unison and every object within the holy precinct contributed to the overall meaning. My aim had been to recover this larger meaning as much as possible.

Reconstruction of the heavily damaged remains showed that the precinct with a structural temple on the northern hilltop was self-contained and could have been easily controlled and managed. Remains of a wall surrounding the plateau of the north hill and an elephant path leading to it shows that there is much more to the site that may be revealed by further exploration and excavation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASI: Archaeological Survey of India.

ASIAR: Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report.

ASIAR,WC: Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report Western Circle.

JBBAS: Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Asiatic Society.

CII: Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum

EITA: *Encyclopaedia of the Indian Temple Architecture*, By Krishna Deva, Miester and Dhaky.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1995 I was assigned a job by the Environment and Planning Co-ordination Organization (EPCO), a government of Madhya Pradesh undertaking, to study the environs of Udayagiri Hills cave temples in the Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh. Udayagiri hills are located 55kms to the north east of Bhopal and 7kms north to the Buddhist centre of Sānchī. The ancient city of Vidiśā was just 3kms to the northeast of these hills. This ancient city, Besnagar, was strategically located at the confluence of two rivers, the Bes and Betwā (Map 01).[1]

The 1995 study looks into the environs of Udayagiri and includes the land, rivers and forests around it. Twenty rock-cut cave temples were excavated and embellished on this hill, mostly during Candragupta Vikramāditya II's time in the early fifth century CE (Map 04). The site is controlled by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the official body of the Government of India which manages all archaeological locations deemed to be of national importance. To manage such sites ASI issues a notification declaring it as protected under an Act which prevents any construction or destruction on the premises and the immediate area around it. The ASI has notified the 'caves' as protected monuments at Udayagiri. My study of the environs of these caves resulted into a Heritage Management Plan (Map-02).[2]

During the course of working on the Heritage Plan, I looked at various studies on Udayagiri such as J.F.Fleet (1886), Cunningham (1875-76), Luard (1908), H.H.Lake (1910), D.R.Bhandārkar (1914), Garde (1923-1945),

D.R.Pātil (1948) and M.D.Khare (1975-77). I found that the studies conducted so far were mostly confined to icons or epigraphs on the site and did not address questions such as: Why were the caves made here? What do they mean? What was the relationship of the caves to each other? What are the linkages and their extent to neighboring sites? There was obviously more to the site than the available studies on the subject could explain. It was primarily with this concern that a research study was conceived. It was a chance meeting with Dr Adam Hardy at PRASADA in 1997 that acted as a catalyst for furthering my work on Udayagiri and resulted in this thesis.

Previous Studies of the Site

The earliest mention of Udayagiri was by Capt. Edward Fell who started explorations at Sānchī at the instigation of Colin Meckenzie.[3] He made one quick sketch of the Varāha that is in the RAS, London. Interest in Sānchī was stimulated when General Henry Taylor of the Bengal Cavalry camped near the site in the course of a military campaign in 1818.[4]

It was Alexander Cunningham who brought a scholarly approach to archaeological excavations in India. Alexander Cunningham (1814-93) wrote his twenty-three volume *Archaeological Survey of India Reports* which he began writing in 1861 upon his retirement from the army. Cunningham covered a vast territory in his explorations and recorded his observations. He left behind a large quantity of material for future archaeologists.

He founded the Archaeological Survey of India that continues to this day and still maintains his approach to archaeology. During his exploration of this region he was drawn to a column which he considered to be of exceptional

importance. This column, which later turned out to be Garuḍa *dhvaja stambha* (standard) of Vāsudeva, generated deep interest amongst scholars and gave a totally new dimension to the historical past of the country. It is known as Heliodorus column because of name of the donor inscribed on its shaft.

Cunningham's discoveries encouraged H.H. Lake to carry out major excavations in Vidiśā region in 1910.[5] He was the Superintending Engineer with Gwalior, a princely state of which Vidiśā was then a part. Lake excavated the mounds of Besnagar and around the Heliodorus pillar for just six weeks but collected numerous artefacts and objects. The maps which were attached to his description of the excavations could not be located anywhere, despite a lengthy search. The exact locations of his digs could not be confirmed and thus had to be worked out on the basis of his descriptions. His was the most important collection campaign undertaken and the material was placed in a temporary museum erected at Besnagar. The material from this museum was shifted to the Gwalior museum in 1927-28. Lake also dug a trench across the plinth of the Gupta temple on the northern hilltop at Udayagiri. He refers to the hill of Udayagiri as a holy hill and visualizes the city of Besnagar as 'a famous city of the Buddhists, full of grandeur and solemnity.'[6] He was apparently in search of Bûddhist remains when he excavated the trench. Bhandārkar writes, 'Lake seems to have conceived the mound to contain the ruins of a stupa, to expose the relic casket for which he had cut the trench'.[7] He left a big breach in the middle of the Gupta temple where he had excavated.

Bhandārkar, the Superintending Archaeologist with the Western Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India, conducted excavations (1913-14, 1914-15) on the Besnagar mounds including the Heliodorus Pillar.[8] He (1914-15) also

excavated on top of the northern hill at Udayagiri. This excavation at Udayagiri has been the only one conducted at the site to date.[9] His reports of Besnagar excavations were written in great detail and were accompanied by equally detailed plans, a quality that was entirely lacking in his Udayagiri work. The Udayagiri report is nothing but a series of impressions and hasty conclusions and does not give any description of the finds. His diaries are not traceable and the report makes little sense of the fieldwork. The report is discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII. Suffice it to say that Bhandārkar's excavation was conducted over two seasons and left the site in utter confusion. The excavated material was shifted to the Museum at Gwalior.

The Archaeology Department of Gwalior State, headed by M.B.Garde, established the Gurjarī Mahal Museum at Gwalior.[10] This museum houses one of the most outstanding collections of ancient Indian sculpture. Most of the material mentioned by Cunningham was placed in this museum, although some was taken to the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Garde wrote annual reports of the activities of the department, maintaining a detailed account of the work undertaken and objects collected. These reports, extending from 1923 to 1945, form an important record of the modifications that the sites, including Udayagiri, underwent during his tenure. Epigraphs and coins were systematically collected and inventories prepared. Much of Garde's work was in the field of conservation and maintenance.

There was no further interest in the site till D.R.Pātil wrote a monograph on Udayagiri.[11] The monograph puts together the scattered references by scholars on the caves and images. In his report he listed 20 caves, increasing the number from 10 as noted by Cunningham. The

methodology that was adopted was, however, no different to Cunningham's, in that the caves were studied as individual monuments unrelated to each other both conceptually, morphologically or iconographically. This monograph has, since its publication, been a basic reference for many who have written on Udayagiri's art and architecture and we too will have reason to mention it in our study.

Udayagiri After Independence

The first work after Independence at Besnagar was by M.D.Khare who conducted excavations near Heliodorus column in 1963-65 and again 1975-77.[12] Khare was engaged in writing the report of these excavations when he died in 1984. The reports have yet to be published. His field diaries were with him when he died and are not traceable today. He did however, write a book called *Vidiśā* that was published by the Hindi Granth Academy of the Government of Madhya Pradesh in 1985.[13] He mentioned his finds in this book in some detail but since the book was meant for general reading on the subject and was not a report, it is of limited use. Still, the book acquires some significance given the limited records that are available on Besnagar.

At Besnagar Khare dug trenches at eight places (Map 03). The highlight of his excavation was the discovery of the plinth of the Vāsudeva temple at the Heliodorus pillar site.[14] In spite of the extent of his excavation work he seems to have added little to the existing knowledge of Besnagar. His interest in Udayagiri was peripheral and in his book he devotes only a few pages to a description of its caves. No attempt was made to tie the development on this hill with that at Besnagar. He cites the presence of Mauryan, Śunga, Nāga and other remains on this hill without specifying what these remains were.

While Khare was working, a much greater scholar, V.S.Agrawala, was beginning to recognise that Udayagiri was a major religious centre during Gupta period in the early fifth century CE. The deities carved here, in conjunction with an elaborate water cosmology, were recognised by Agrawala as a turning point in the vocabulary of Indian art and architecture. The formative importance of Udayagiri in the iconography and architecture was elaborated by other scholars, notably James Harle, Joanna Williams, Debala Mitra and Krishna Deva. All have written on aspects of the iconography and chronological development of images and motifs.[15]

Chronology is a complicated subject that requires careful comparative study of styles and features. Both Harle and Williams have discussed the formative importance of carvings at Udayagiri in the chronological development of Gupta period iconography. Debala Mitra in an ingenious work has traced the origin of the Varāha and Anantaśāyana Viṣṇu panels to textual sources and has established a co-relation between the literary sources and sculptures.[16] She has identified most of the figures in the panels convincingly. In my study however, it is Harle's identity of the unidentified figure in Varāha panel that forms the basis of identification of other figures and objects.[17]

In architectural terms the formative importance of the jambs, lintels, plinth moldings and single-cell *garbhagṛiha* at Udayagiri was recognized by Krishna Deva.[18] He referred to the Gupta period as the turning point in the history of architecture. Tadgell has taken up this theme, linking the humble beginnings at Udayagiri to his study of evolution and chronological development of architecture in India as a whole.[19]

Despite the contribution of all the authors mentioned above, they have chosen to read the site as a dislocated ensemble of lintels, jambs, iconography and epigraphs. The fragmented approach is common to most studies dealing with Indian art and architecture. Without wishing to undermine the importance of proper attention to detail, and indeed even drawing extensively on such works by earlier scholars, my own approach has been to see the caves, inscriptions and images in a wider context. This context is firstly the hill of Udayagiri and its immediate setting and secondly the locality, landscape and archaeology of the surrounding countryside.

Methodology and Approach

There was no clear-cut method when I started the present work. Previous accounts of a subject are normally the first step of any research and also formed the beginning of my study. Old photographs of the site taken in 1908/10 and during the excavation of 1914, courtesy ASI archives at Delhi, turned out to be a valuable source of information. Studying the photographs along with the reports on the excavations I found that potentially valuable points were passed over by Bhandārkar, who thought them uninteresting at the time. For example, while writing about the shrine on the hilltop he dismisses the presence of porch and hall in front of the shrine in just one sentence. With that attitude it was no surprise that he uprooted all traces of their location from the platform on which they were located. He also did not leave behind any description or maps of these important structures. Therefore, in order not to miss the significance of any point, the site was fully measured and mapped apart from documenting it photographically and with sketches.

The works of John Irwin, Bakker, Schopen and Willis have shown that minute scrutiny of earlier records, combined with field research to contextualise these records, can bring out meaning which were not previously apparent.[20] The rich body of factual data and interpretations by these authors has given new life to the ancient sites and new grounds for research.

In my own fieldwork, the find spots of the finds were revisited with an emphasis on both interpretive observation and collection of fresh empirical data. This led to discovery of unexpected and hidden substructures and underlying principles of the development at Udayagiri. Links and interconnections between the various elements and components became clear, for example the relationship of the caves and images layout to celestial events such as equinoxes and solstices. Observation of the shadows and their measurements at noon on solstice days and equinox days made sense of the alignment and placement of Viṣṇuśāyana image (Photo 41). This brought new meaning to the existing data and allowed many seemingly unrelated parts to be linked rather like pieces of an incomplete puzzle. Interpretations were arrived at by observation of the site over a prolonged period of time and in all seasons.

New vision lines highlighted the role of surveillance and control in the layout of the site. The movement of the people and hidden pathways were discovered by following these vision lines. The path of the water and its symbolic and visual importance on the site could be traced by reading the layout with the iconography on the site.

One of the methods adopted was to identify the original location of objects by visiting the site with old photographs. For example, old photographic prints from the

ASI archives of a large lion capital, datable to the second century BCE, now in the collection of the Archaeological Museum at Gwalior, may be mentioned.[21] Having procured a copy I was able to identify the background and rock formations in the photograph during a field trip with Willis (Photo 09). The exact location of the column and this capital could be determined, a finding of considerable archaeological importance. The detective work was confirmed by the find of a chip of the capital from the spot where it had fallen in ancient times (Photo 10). Through similar investigations into the meagre remains on and from the site a picture could be reconstructed.

Epigraphs form an important source of information on their own. When read along with the site layout, placement and iconography acquired new meanings. The connection of the Iron Pillar with Udayagiri could be envisaged on the suggestion by Roy that Vīrasena was the author of the posthumous epigraph eulogising king Candra (i.e. Candragupta II) inscribed on the Iron Pillar at Mehrauli.[22] The presence of the Iron Pillar at Udayagiri, taken up in detail in Chapter V, gives a totally different dimension to the constructions and caves on the hill. The fact that the entire development was taken in one campaign gave the land in between the monuments greater meaning and significance. The site, thus, became the sacred terrain of Viṣṇu, where the political and spiritual ambition of Candragupta Vikramāditya II were expressed in a landscape imbued in myth and ritual.

Questions relating to the cardinal directions, axiallity and centrality of the sacred site were considered while examining the morphology of the cultural remains. These considerations were furthered by a detailed contour survey of Udayagiri. This was a major step as it

showed that previous surveys were inaccurate. For example the height of the hill, which Cunningham thought was 100m turned out to be 50m (Map 66). The cardinal direction of the opening of each cave, distance of the major visible hills of Sānchī and Lohāngī were also measured. The major element in this study turned out to be the astronomical observations that were conducted from here in the ancient times. This hypothesis demanded an accurate record of angles of direction and the alignment of major and minor monuments at Udayagiri. This was done by the use of precision survey instruments and the transference of the data to a detailed CAD-based map and elevation some parts of which are illustrated here in Maps 04-08 and 59 to 66. The site is very disturbed and little can be made out of the remains today. Many agents caused disturbances to the site from thirteenth century onwards, from invading armies to archaeologists and treasure seekers. Lastly conservation work since beginning of twentieth century also changed the site. Reconstruction from the fragments, therefore, forms the major portion of the study.

Reconstruction was facilitated by the study of Gupta period sites and temples of later dynasties. Centres of Buddhism and *stūpa* sites were also studied to provide background to the developments at Udayagiri. For an understanding of temples contemporary to Udayagiri, Tigowa, Nāchanā, Bhumara, Eran, Deogarh, Rāmgarh, Badoh-Pathāri and Sindhoori were visited.[23] To understand the development of later architecture, temples at Udayapur, Vidiśā, Khajurāho, Kāgpur, Gyāraspur and Bhojpur were studied.[24] Buddhist monuments and rock shelter sites provided an understanding of earlier developments; sites included Sānchī, Satdhārā, Andher, Bhojpur-Pipaliā, Sonāri, Kharbaī and Bhimbaithikā (Map 01).[25] The Vākāṭakā sites of Rāmtek and Mansar, contemporary to Udayagiri, were visited to ensure a wide perspective.[26]

In short, the approach adopted was a combination of field trips and library search. The written records included material from the archives and museum registers. Field trips and visits to the museum were undertaken to study the object's original location as well as its current location in museums. Museums such as Gwalior (Gujari Mahal) Museum, Vidiśā, Sānchī, Bhopal, Delhi, Rāmbāgh (Satna, M.P.) and the British Museum were visited to study the objects that had been removed from the site and the neighboring area.

Inscriptions provided considerable data, even in cases where they had not been deciphered. One of the important associations that could be made on the basis of the inscriptions was the presence of the Iron Pillar, currently at Mehrauli in Delhi. Understanding of the traditions and myths prevalent in the region was used as scientific knowledge to piece together this association between the Iron Pillar and Udayagiri.

Participation in events related to the site such as the festival of *Niśān-Yātrā* and discussions and interviews were also included in fieldwork to develop an understanding of traditions and rituals associated with Udayagiri (Photo 35). Walking around the landscape and repeated visits to the site in different seasons were made. In total, more than 60 days were spent on the site itself.

For a better appreciation of the association of the site with specific rituals such as *Niśān-Yātrā*, traditions such as worship of Viṣṇu *padas*, myths such as *Yajña* Varāha, Gaṅgā worship and events like the Udayagiri festival that have a bearing were studied. The process of destruction of the site was analyzed on the basis of the debris and the larger historical events that took place in

the area. Hardy has described how a network of associations, built up as much in the realms of myth and poetry as of architecture and sculpture, binds particular forms one to another.[27] It is just these kinds of associations that form the basis for the reconstruction of Udayagiri. The attempt is not just to reconstruct the body of Udayagiri from its disembodied members but to rebuild its personality and to give it a soul.

Hills of Udayagiri

The hills of Udayagiri are aligned northeast to southwest on its longer axis. It consists of two hills joined together with a saddle in between. The northern hill is the higher of the two, reaching a height of 50m. River Bes touches the foot of the northern hill at a place called Rās ghāt (Map 04). There are twenty caves (as listed by the ASI). Cunningham numbered the caves from the southern hill calling the only cave on that hill 'Cave 1' or 'False cave'.[28] This cave faces east and is placed midway to the top of the hill. There are some remains on the summit of this hill and on the slope, the meaning of which was very difficult to establish, due to the near total destruction of the structures.

Cave 2 is at the southern foothill of the saddle and is cut out of a boulder jutting out towards the east. The embellishment on the doorjamb is only partially visible. The main concentration of the caves is however around the passage that is cut across the saddle at its junction with the northern hill (Map 04-05). Most of the caves face east towards a tank. Some caves are cut on the southern wall of this passage where steps are cut in front (Map-05). The steps lead from the foot of the hill to a height of 9m before bifurcating to the saddle top and to the northern hilltop.

There are remains of a Gupta period temple on the top of the northern hill. Steps cut into the hill takes one down from the north of this hill to Cave 20, which is a Jain dedication. The steps continue down to the bottom of the hill where the last Brahmanical Cave 19, also called Amrita cave, is located.[29] Complete details of these caves and their layout, as they exist today, are recorded in the sheets that are here attached.

Historical Geography of the Region

Udayagiri lies to the west of the ancient city of Besnagar (ancient Vidiśā) and can be seen from the old ramparts. Besnagar was located at the fork of the rivers Bes and Betwā and has variously been called Vaides,[30] Vidiśā,[31] or Vedisa[32] (Skt. Vaidiśa, Vaidaśa). In Pāli texts it is called Vessnagar, Vessanagara or Besnagar[33]. The town was also called Bhaddalpur in Jain texts. Epigraphic evidence demonstrates that in post-Gupta times the new town was not called Vidiśā but rather Bhāillasvāmipura or Bhāilasvāmidevapura, the 'town of Bhāillasvāmi'.[34] The inscriptions refer to the presence of a large Sun temple in the area by the name of Bhāillasvāmi.[35] From this comes Bhilsā or Bhelsā, which is recorded by al-Bīrūnī. Aurangzeb changed the name of the town to Ālaṃgīṛpur in the seventeenth century. During the rule of the Scindias of Gwalior in the nineteenth century the name was reverted back to Bhelsā and since independence the town is known as Vidisha. Vidiśā was generally recognized as the chief city of eastern Mālwā in ancient India.[36] The city was also referred to as the capital of Avantī[37]. Malwā forms a distinct unit (27°70'-25°10' and 73°45'-79°14'E) lying almost in the heart of India.[38]

The Malwā Plateau contains the following river basins:

i. The Upper Māhi Basin

ii. The Upper Chambal Pārbati Basin

iii. The Upper Betwā Basin

The Vidisha region forms part of the Upper Betwā Basin and is situated at 23°31' N and 77°49' E. The town stands on the east bank of Betwā river and was once fortified with three gates: the Raisen Gate in the south, the Bes Gate in the west, and the Gandhi Gate in the northeast. The most important structure in the fortified city was the now destroyed Bijā Mandir.

Now within the town is the cylindrical rock-like hill called Lohāngi. It rises to a height of around 60m and has a Śunga-period (2nd century BCE) capital resting on the summit. This inverted lotus capital had two elephants and two lions on its top, but only the claws and nails survive. A mosque is built out of the ruins of a Paramāra-period temple nearby. Another ancient feature is a large rock-cut cistern. Lohangi Pīr a fifteenth century Chishti saint has his tomb at the north-east corner of the rock.

Vidisha is surrounded on several sides by remains of Buddhist stūpas and monasteries dating back to the third century BCE. Cunningham has given a detailed account of these remains.[39] Amongst the sites that he explored were the ruins of Sānchī, Sonāri, Satdhārā, Bhojpur-Pipaliā and Andher, all within a radius of 20-25kms.[40] It is not just Buddhist remains that we find in the area but also images of Nāgas and Nāginis that may have had an independent following. There are also large Yakṣa and Yakṣī images from Besnagar (now in Vidiśā, Gwalior, Calcutta and Delhi museums) which indicate a wide variety of cults were practiced in the region in ancient times.

The dependence of both Udayagiri and Sānchī was on the town of Besnagar and both religious centres probably contested for common resources. There are many similarities between the two sites, such as the height of the hills, the visibility from Besnagar, proximity to Betwā and abundance of sandstone for construction. Looking at the water structures at and around the two hills, it also appears that the builders of the monuments were drawing on the available knowledge of water sourcing and harvesting on these hills.

The city of Besnagar stood at the crossroad of the Dakṣinapatha and the Uttarapatha. That Besnagar was an important halting place for traders is supported by references to thriving commerce and trade in the ancient texts.[41] One of the feeder routes of Uttarapatha was the only route joining Kausāmbi to the seaport of Bharukkaccha, which passed through Vidiśā.[42] Dakṣinapatha, on the other hand, stretched from Pātaliputra in Magadha to Pratiṣṭhāna on the Godāvarī.

The significant barriers to reaching Besnagar while travelling were the two rivers of Bes and Betwā.[43] They take two totally different routes from the Paripatrā mountain ranges at Bhopal (their place of origin), running parallel for upwards of a mile towards east. Thereafter, Betwā turns sharply to the north for half a mile and then branches into two streams before it meets Bes. This place where the three rivers meet is called Trivenī.[44] On the land enclosed by the branching of Betwā is a famous place of pilgrimage, called the Caran Tīrth. The turning of any river towards the north is called *Uttaravāhinī*, which along with the Trivenī makes the spot worthy to be a *tīrtha sthāna*.[45] The Skandapurāṇa refers to Vidiśā as a *tīrtha* or holy place, which should be visited after visiting Someśvara.[46]

Historically, the earliest reference to Vidiśā relates to the time of the Mauryan King Aśoka who halted here on his way to Ujjain.[47] It is said that at Vidiśā he met Devī, the beautiful daughter of a local merchant, whom he married.[48] She bore him two children, Mahendra and Saṅghamitra, both of whom were instrumental in spreading Buddhism to Ceylon.[49] Puṣyamitra Śuṅga who took over from the Mauryas belonged to Vidiśā and was a general in the army of Bṛhadratha Maurya.[50] He could however, get only the eastern part of the kingdom from the Mauryas; this included Vidiśā where his son Agnimitra was stationed.[51] The ninth Śuṅga king Bhagābhadra, who is referred as Kāśīputra in the Heliodorus pillar inscription, was contemporary to the Greek king Antialkidas at Taxila.[52] During Śuṅga rule, the *stūpas* at Sānchī and Satdhārā were covered with a thick layer of dressed stone and plaster, which can still be seen at places. The *stūpas* at Sonāri, Bhojpur-Pipaliā and Andher also came into existence around this time.[53] The Sātavāhana dynasty of Andhra probably reigned at Vidiśā till about 130-180 CE. *Toraṇas* were added to main *stūpa* at Sānchī during this period that ushered in a new phase of craftsmanship in stone. Ivory workers from Vidiśā participated in this major artistic endeavour.[54]

The history of Vidiśā is not entirely clear in the first three centuries CE, but broken Buddha images (inscribed) made of Mathurā sandstone during Kuṣāna period have been discovered from inside the *stupas* at Sānchī.[55] A coin of Kuśāna king Vimakhdaphisis was also found at Vidiśā.[56] This indicates some sort of relationship of Vidiśā with Mathurā even if there was no direct political control. The Nāga dynasty of Mathurā and Pawāyā may have gained ground at Vidiśā after the third century CE, and we find that Vīrasena Nāga coins as well as those of Ganapati Nāga and Bhimanāga are still found in great abundance in

the fields around Vidiśā.[57] The large quantity of finds points towards the presence of a Nāga coin mint at Vidiśā. It is possible that Vidiśā may have been one of the capitals of the Nāga dynasty.

Large shell inscriptions on the rock faces at Udayagiri (discussed in Chapter II) probably belong to this period. These shell inscriptions have yet to be deciphered and may reveal new dimensions to the history of the place when they are satisfactorily understood.

The important inscription that does provide the date to a historical event is the epigraph inscribed on the face of Cave 6 at Udayagiri.[58] The inscription clearly establishes the presence of Candragupta II Vikramāditya at Udayagiri in the year 82 (401/402 CE). The coming of Candragupta II to Vidiśā is attributed to his weak brother Rāmagupta who surrendered his wife to the Khṣatrapas of Western India. Rāmagupta, who is not recognized by the Imperial Guptas in any of their inscriptions, is documented by the coins that he issued from Vidiśā. Most of the coins of Rāmagupta are in copper with a lion on the obverse and a half moon with the name Rāmagupta inscribed on the reverse.[59] The discovery of three Jain images from Besnagar with inscriptions[60] mentioning king Rāmagupta confirms the reign of this Gupta king before Candragupta II, around 375 CE.[61]

Only one coin of Candragupta II was discovered from the city of Besnagar. It is, thus, mostly through the architectural remains and inscriptions that one can understand his reign at Vidiśā. By the end of his reign Udayagiri had become an important Vaiṣṇava centre.

Sometime during the post-Gupta period a large section of the population moved from Besnagar to the present town of Bhilsā (Vidisha). The reasons for the move are not

clear but the step well by the side the Bīja Mandir and a massive stone lintel incorporated into the Sultanate city gate and other seventh century fragments indicate that the town had come into existence by this time.[62] One cannot be sure whether there was a rapid exodus to the new town to the south of the river Betwā or whether the shift was a gradual one over a few centuries. The town had gained importance by the eleventh century when the Bījā Mandir was built there.[63] From the remains it appears that the temple must have been the largest at that time. It was dedicated to either Śiva or goddess Carcikā as is documented by inscriptions, notably a record on pillar belonging to King Naravarman (1094-1130). There are many fragments lying in the debris of this temple that could have belonged to an earlier temple, which indicates that there were earlier structures on this particular site.

The only significant work on Udayagiri after the Guptas is by Willis.[64] Apart from translating and interpreting five inscriptions from Udayagiri, he has also discussed the location of the temple of Bhāillasvāmi. A series of records show that the Sun god or Bhāillasvāmi, was a leading deity in a big temple that enjoyed such high reputation that it invited the wrath of the Delhi sultans who attacked Bhilsā and pulled down the building in two campaigns, the first in 1234 and the second in 1292.[65] From the remains of the temple it appears that it was a *Bhumija* temple with *karnā-bhadra* arrangement.[66]

An important record that mentions Bhāillasvāmi belongs to the eleventh century. This record is significant for our purposes because it contains the word Udayagiri for the first time. The record relates to a Sun temple.[67] After examining the historical remains from Udayagiri and all the other related records, it is argued

in my study that this Sun temple mentioned in the records was located at Udayagiri.

[1] Spelling of all place names follows Survey of India maps.
[2] INTACH Regional Chapter Bhopal, *Udayagiri and its Environs: Conservation in Development,* (Bhopal, 1996).
[3] British Library, (Mss 171 (Misc.), letter no 25 dated 15 November 1818.
[4] Michael Willis: *Buddhist Reliquaries from Ancient India,* (London, 2000), p.66.
[5] H.H.Lake, *JBBRAS,* 'Besnagar', (1910), pp.135-46.
[6] Ibid., p.135. It is difficult to understand why he called it the holy hill. Were the caves under worship? When he said holy did he associate the hill to Buddhist remains on the top of the hill?
[7] D.R.Bhandārkar, *ASI WC AR,* 'Part II(a) Excavations 9.' (Bombay, 1914), pp. 59-72.
[8] D.R.Bhandārkar, *ASI AR,* 'Excavation At Besnagar', (1913-14, pp.187-225) & (1914-15, pp.66-88).
[9] Bhandārkar, 'Excavations', pp.59-72. The excavation took two seasons and a total duration of four months.
[10] M.B.Garde, *Annual Report of The Archaeological Department Gwalior State,* (1923-1945). The reports are records of find places of objects and epigraphs. He also systematically recorded the conservation works undertaken by his department. This helped me working out the original site conditions to some extend. Most importantly, he made a lot of photographic records on glass negatives. These glass negatives are part of Gurjarī Mahal museum.
[11] D.R.Pātil, 'The Monuments of the Udayagiri Hill'. *Vikrama Volume,* Gwalior State, (Ujjain, 1949), pp. 377-428.
[12] M.D.Khare, *Vidiśā,* (Bhopal, 1985).
[13] Khare worked in two spells one in 1963-65 and again as Superintending Archaeologist of Bhopal Circle in 1975-77.
[14] Khare, Discovery of A Viṣṇu Temple Near The Heliodorus Pillar, Besnagar, District Vidiśā (M.P). *Lalit Kalā* 13. The plinth was of an elliptical temple measuring 8.1mts on its longer axis and shorter 3mt. He dated the temple to 3rd Century BCE, which makes it the remains of the earliest temple discovered so far. The point is substantiated by the painting on the rock shelters of Balarāma and Kṛśna at Tikulā in Gwalior, referred to in Chapter II.
[15] James Harle, *Gupta Sculpture,* (Oxford, 1974); Joanna Williams, *The Art of Gupta India Empire and Province,* (Princeton, 1982); V.S.Agarwala, *Gupta Art,* (Varanasi, 1977); EITA (1988).
[16] Debala Mitra, 'Varāha Cave of Udayagiri'. *JASOB* 5 (1963), pp.99-103.
[17] Harle, *Gupta Sculpture,* pp. 10-11.
[18] EITA (1988).
[19] Christopher Tadgell, *The History of Architecture in India,* (London, 1994).
[20] John Irwin, *Ancient Indian Cosmogony,* (1950). *Aśokan Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence,* (1976);
Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India,* (Hawai, 1997);
Hans Bakker, *Vaiṣṇavism: The History of the Kṛṣna and Rama Cults and their contribution to Indian Pilgrimage,* (1981). *The Vakatakas an Essay in Hindu Iconography,* (1997);

Willis, *Buddhist Reliquaries,* (London, 2000). *Temples of Gopakṣetra A Regional History of Architecture and Sculpture in Central India AD 600-900,* (London, 1997).

[21] Accession No. 5.

[22] Udai Narain Roy, *Studies in Ancient Indian History and Culture.* (Allahabad, 1969), pp. 1-27.

[23] Tigowa and Sindhoori is 45kms from Jabalpur. Nāchanā and Bhumarā are within 50kms of Satna a district headquaters of the same name in Madhya Pradesh. Eran, Badoh Pathari and Ramgarh are to the north of Vidiśā at a distance of 70kms. Deogarh is near Jhansi.

[24] All these places are in Madhya Pradesh. Udayapur, Kāgpur and Gyaraspur are in Vidiśā district. Bhojpur is 25kms from Bhopal.

[25] Kharbaī and Bhimbaithikā are rock-shelter sites in Raisen district. Kharbaī is 23kms from Bhopal and Bhimbaithikā is 40kms from Bhopal.

[26] Mansar and Rāmtek are 30kms from Nāgpur in Maharashtra.

[27] Adam Hardy, *Indian Temple Architecture Form and Transformation.* (Delhi, 1995).

[28] He may have approached the site from Sānchī and hence must have come across this cave first.

[29] Pātil, 'Udayagiri', (pp. 377-428).

[30] *Rāmāyana* cited in B.C.Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India,* (Paris, 1954): p.336.

[31] *Meghadūtam* cited Ibid., p.336.

[32] *Bṛahtasamhitā* cited Ibid., p.336.

[33] Law, *Geography of Early Buddhism,* p.3.

[34] Michael Willis, 'Inscriptions from Udayagiri: Locating Domains of Devotion, Patronage and Power in the Eleventh Century'. *South Asian Studies,* 17 (2001).

[35] Willis records three inscriptions from this area which mention the sun temple.

[36] Vidiśā is referred to as the capital city of Daśārṇa, Avantī and Malwā at sometimes or the other in the ancient texts. According to *Meghadūtam* of Kālīdāsa fame, Vidiśā was the capital of the Daśarṇa country that was one of the sixteen janapaḍas of Jambudvīpa.

[37] Law, *Ujjaini in Ancient India* (Gwalior, n.d.), p. 4.

[38] R. L. Singh, *A Regional Geography,* (Indore, 1989).

[39] Alexander Cunningham, *Bhilsā Topes,* (London, 1854).

[40] Ibid.

[41] Nayanjyot Lahiri, *Archaeology of Ancient Indian Trade Routes upto c. 200 BC,* (Delhi, 1992), p.381.

[42] Ibid., pp. 368, map 45.

[43] Law, *Historical Geography,* pp.340-341.

[44] Cunningham, *ASIR* 10 (1876-77).

[45] Gaṅgā becomes Uttaravahini at Benaras and is therefore considered revered.

[46] *Vaṅgabāsī* cited in Law, *Historical Geography,* p. 337.

[47] *Mahāvaṃsa,* XIII, 6-9; *Dīpvaṃsa,* VI, 15-16, cited in Willis, *Buddhist Reliquaries.*

[48] *Mahāvaṃsa* cited in Cunningham, *Bhilsā Topes,* p. 95.

[49] Ibid. p. 96.

[50] Khare, *Vidiśā,* p.25.

[51] Ibid., p.34.

[52] Fleet, CII, Vol. III (Calcutta, 1888)

[53] Willis, *Buddhist Reliquaries.*

[54] Inscription on the west column, east face on the southern *torana,* attributed the work to the Ivory workers from Vidiśā.

[55] Marshall, *Monument at Sānchī*. Two broken images are displayed at Sānchī museum. Both the images are inscribed, one is a pedestal of a standing Buddha.
[56] Khare, *Vidiśā*, p.115.
[57] Bhandārkar, *Besnagar*, ASI AR (1914-15).
[58] Fleet, CII.
[59] Khare, *Vidiśā*, p.117.
[60] Ibid., p.132. Cf. Journal of the Oriental Institute, part 18, pp. 247-52.
[61] These three images are currently in Vidiśā museum. Williams dates the images to 375 CE on the basis of the style of iconography. Cf. Agarwala, Harle.
[62] Willis, 'Inscriptions from Udayagiri '.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid. The paper records the inscriptions relating to Bhilsā and Bhāillasvāmi temple. He also discusses the brilliantly carved image of Sun god now in Vidiśā Museum, which he thinks comes from the main niche of the Bhāillasvāmi temple. The image is fully developed iconography of the Sun god and is beautifully sculpted. It belongs not later than 875, and according to him, to the reign of Pratīhāra king Mihira Bhoja.
[66] Adam Hardy (Director of PRASADA) did the preliminary survey of the temple thinks that what remains is two third of the *mandapa*. (Personal Communication, December, 2000).
[67] Willis, 'Inscriptions from Udayagiri'.

Chapter II

Interpreting the pre-Gupta landscape of Udayagiri

Introduction

The object of this chapter is to understand the meaning and significance of Udayagiri before Candragupta Vikramāditya II visited Vidiśā.[1] The meaning is based on the reconstruction of the site and its interpretation. The hill is seen in its totality and includes all its elements such as the rock shelters and the paintings on their surfaces, petroglyphs, engravings, and shell inscriptions along with the sculptures and other archaeological remains. Each one of these subjects has been so far studied as a separate discipline. Rarely have they been analyzed as influencing and affecting each other. In fact, they are different forms of expression by people who shared a common landscape and who may have been contemporary to each other. Even if they were chronologically dispersed, the sharing of one place ties them to the same landscape. The fact that these elements were all present at Udayagiri means that the hill was a 'site' in the map of human activity. It is difficult for each activity not to be part and parcel of the mythological system operating in the larger landscape. It is part of the process of socializing and contextualising of the hill by the adaptation of the natural rock shelters for mythical, ritual or other purposes. Although a clear link between the paintings on these rock shelters, pictoglyphs and shell inscriptions on the one hand and

the development of the site during Gupta period on the other, is difficult to establish, yet every effort is made in this study to establish a relationship. This is done by comparing the theme of paintings and the pictoglyphs with that of iconography during the Gupta period. The analysis given below is based on visits to the rock shelter sites and personal observations.[2]

Natural Rock shelters and Paintings

The natural rock shelters are the most striking pre-Gupta feature of Udayagiri. Some of these shelters are painted with red and white designs and images. The paintings have faded and it is therefore difficult to decipher all the themes. There are some geometrical patterns and figures riding horses. The pattern of paintings is close to the neighboring rock shelters which form part of a band of rock-painting in the Vindhyan ranges in central India. The rock shelters referred to here are those that fall in Betwā source region.[3] Udayagiri is one of the eleven scattered hills that contain rock-shelter paintings and falls just north the Kharbaī, Satkundā, Rāisen painted rock-shelter belt in the Vindhyan hills.

A scrutiny of the themes of the paintings in neighbouring hills revealed animals and objects that were held sacred and may have continued to be held in reverence during the subsequent historic period.[4] Only those objects and items are described here in detail that are relevant to our study of Udayagiri.

Use of Chairs, throne or stools.

Nāgorī, a small hill adjacent to the Buddhist *stūpas* of Sānchī, contains images inspired by the development of the Buddhist centre nearby. It is

important to note that Nāgorī hill was a quarry site and was also a sculpture manufacturing site. One painting there shows a person on a throne and several adjutants and umbrella bearers. This painting was done in the reverse, meaning the figures are blocked out like stencils and the ground is painted.

Persons sitting on chairs, stools or thrones are also shown in the paintings of the rock shelters at Kharbaī and Satkuṇḍā near Rāisen (Photo 01). Depictions of seated men, kings or gods are shown at Sānchī, some on thrones or stools. However, seated figures carved in the round are rare. The only examples seem to be some much-damaged pot-bellied figures, perhaps Yakṣas, dating to the fourth or fifth centuries. These are presently kept on the terrace below temple 45. The seated mothers from Besnagar and the seated mothers in the caves of Udayagiri carry this theme to our site and indicate pre-historic antecedents to the mature iconography.

Guarded enclosures that may depict mythological, sacred or ceremonial spaces.

References to *āyatana* or an enclosed space that was sacred or where gods dwell are encountered frequently in ancient texts.[5] Archaeological evidences of these enclosures are, however, rare. It is in Vidīśā region that some remains of railings for enclosure can be found.[6] Visual depiction of these sacred spaces at Kharbaī and Satkuṇḍā shows that the concept was known in the region. At Kharbaī there are depictions of enclosed spaces with spotted deer skins arranged in a certain way so as to convey formality (Photo 02). At Satkuṇḍā a man is shown seated on a chair inside this space with a tree and a sentry guarding the entrance,

indicating that they were ritual spaces. Trees as centres of religious or magic functions are still a very common phenomenon in India.[7] This theme is repeated at several places in the rock shelters at Kharbaī and Satkuṇḍā. The point that there were formal demarcations between the sacred and the secular is taken up in Chapter VIII. The main point for the present purpose is that the sacred enclosures have ancient antecedents in and around Udayagiri.

Musical instruments, theatrical cultic festivities.

In some illustrations of festivities, processions are shown with jesters, acrobats and dancers accompanied by musicians. Drummers and harp players are shown in paintings of the Bhopal and its contiguous rock shelters. Of particular significance is the harp shown in the rock paintings (Photo 03). The harp is similar to that carved on the doorway of Cave 4 at Udayagiri (Photo 51). The harps are constructed from a bow, fastened at one end into a resonant body, which at times is an elongated oval. A number of harp depictions are, however, without such resonance bodies. The number of strings is not always clear. Neumayer gives an average of four to the number of strings in the harp.[8]

Music and dance are a strong part of Udayagiri carvings. The descent of Gaṅgā in the Varāha panel at Udayagiri Cave 5 is accompanied with music and dance. The harp has a special significance in Gupta period in that it is shown in the coins of Samudragupta, indicating the instrument had royal associations. At Udayagiri it ornaments the door lintel in Cave 4, named 'Vīnā cave' by Cunningham.[9] The Vīnā carved in this cave is the same as the one shown in the rock paintings. The

conclusion then, is that the relief carvings at Udayagiri are not unique in this regard but show a wide interest and history in the musical arts in the Mālwā region before and during the Gupta period.

Deified images of animals, particularly boars.

Large figures of deified animals are common in the rock-art which survives in the vicinity of Bhopal. Pictures of deified boars in the very earliest rock-art style are known from Fireṇgī and Bhīmbetkā, the first 18km from Bhopal and the second nearer Hoshangabad. Neumayer points out that the cult around these deified boars seems to have been prevalent during the whole Mesolithic period.[10] Chalcolithic worship of deified animals probably continued this trend which, in due course, contributed to animal deities in Hinduism.

At Bhīmbetkā the boar is much larger than the human figures that surround it, and is decorated with lines and designs. This has special significance for the study of Udayagiri, as the depiction of Viṣṇu in his Boar incarnation is the centre piece of the developments that took place on the site during the early Gupta period. Although it is difficult to link the Bhīmbetkā paintings directly to Udayagiri, it would appear that the frequent representation of the Boar incarnation in Mālwa has pre-historic beginnings and that the significance of these ancient boars was so deeply rooted in the popular imagination that it had to be accommodated in mature Hinduism.

At Udayagiri, few painting survive and the only rock shelter with significant material is at the northern side of the north hill. This rock shelter is at a height of 21m from the road on a vertical cliff. It is located just above Cave 19. Mesolithic tools and

upper Paleolithic tools indicate an early occupation. Dating the rock paintings is a difficult task and is attempted on the basis of themes depicted in the paintings. For example, the paintings in Nāgorī hill rock shelters near Sānchī show symbols and paraphernalia related to early Buddhism and therefore form the basis for dating. No such clear images are available at Udayagiri but on the basis of geometrical patterns it appears that the shelters were painted in the post-Mauryan era.[11] The presence of these historic paintings itself mean that there were paintings below it which are not visible to us today.

Although this does not lead to any clear links between the site and any historic event, one can say that prior to Candragupta II the site was occupied both physically and ritualistically. Shell inscriptions overlap the paintings and form the top layer on the rock shelter surfaces. It appears that, contrary to the general impression, the people frequenting the caves were far from primitive, the presence of inscriptions indicating a literate audience. Many of the rock shelters in the region have inscriptions in both Brāhmī and in shell characters.[12] All the rock shelter sites mentioned above show signs of prolonged use, some as late as Gupta period.[13]

The relationship of the rock shelters to developments in the post Mauryan period is not immediately apparent. Evidences of dwellings in the rock shelters are few.[14] At some places, however, skeletons were found in excavations, thirteen from Bhīmbetkā and nineteen from Mirzapur, making it likely that these were burial sites.[15] Worth mentioning in this context is a painting from Firengi.[16] It shows a man lying horizontal with a bird perched on top (Photo 04).

There are two more human figures and an elephant by his side. This may be interpreted as a ritual of offering the dead to the bird, which might symbolize the departed soul. The relationship of burial and sacred sites is traditionally very close and ancestral worship on burial sites is practiced even today in some tribal societies. The offerings to the dead in current Hinduism, it should be noted, involve giving some of the offering to a crow.

The natural rock shelters are located in two groups at Udayagiri. The first group is located on the northern side of the northern hill. This group overlooks the river Bes and has as many as twenty natural rock shelters with remains of painted shell inscriptions. The other group of rock-shelters forms a crescent and is located on the southern side of the northern hill. It is on this side that a passage has been carved out across the hill. These natural caves appear to have been in use prior to any construction activity on this site as indicated by stone tools found on the surface. It may be pointed out that significant Chalcolithic remains were discovered from the northern bank of the river Betwā where it joins the Bes and at another site towards Sānchī called Rangāī. Both the sites are very close to Udayagiri, and it is likely that more Chalcolithic and early historic sites lie between the Besnagar rampart and Udayagiri hill. Julia Shaw has currently undertaken extensive explorations of the area and her study (forthcoming) will reveal the density of historical sites in the area.

Shell Inscriptions

As just noted, the paintings in the rock-shelters at Udayagiri are multi-layered with the final layer invariably being shell inscriptions. Shell inscriptions or Śaṅkhalipī received the name from James Prinsep, the great epigraphist, on account of the letter shapes and flourishes having a similarity to the form of shells or conches (*śaṅkha*). Since then many scholars have tried to understand the script but have succeeded in reading only a few of the letters successfully.[17] The true nature of what is written in these inscriptions is not very clear as the epigraphs generally consist of only a few characters. This has given rise to speculation that the shell inscriptions are only signatures or names. This is supported by the dedicatory inscription at Udayagiri Cave 6 where the panel with the Gupta record of 401-02 has what appears to be a Shell-script 'signature' below it. The script appears at sacred sites and may be sacred words, invocations, the commemoration of certain events or even holy men's names. These aspects have so far been ignored in shell inscription studies.

Shell inscriptions are found at Bhārhut and at Sānchī.[18] The famous Aśokan pillar at Sānchī with the Aśokan edict is also inscribed with shell inscription. At least one pillar excavated from the Heliodorus pillar site had an epigraph inscribed in this script.[19] That shell inscriptions on these pillars were inscribed later seems likely given their positioning and the way they seem unrelated to earlier work. However, this only shows that their use started sometime later. The script

seems much more closely associated with the Gupta period as it appears in most of the places where temples and remains of the fifth century are found. For example, shell inscriptions are found on the temple stones of Tigōwā, Eran, Deogarh and Badoh Pathāri, all of which have significant Gupta period remains.[20] Inscriptions are also found on the objects and architectural fragments associated with the Guptas, such as the sacrificial horse sculpture at Lucknow Museum.[21]

The peculiarity of shell inscriptions at Udayagiri is that they are inscribed directly on the mountain. The shell inscriptions are done on a vast scale, some being more than several metres high and they have such a prominent place that it is difficult to think of Udayagiri's sacred landscape without taking them into consideration. I have made these inscriptions part of my work and have found that they are important for understanding the relative chronology and development of the site. The script is not deciphered as yet so we do not know what it may reveal when it is finally read.[22] We can however look at where the inscriptions are carved for tell-tale signs about the nature of the writing and the specific importance of the locations on the hill where the writing was placed.

The largest concentration of shell inscriptions at Udayagiri is around the passage between the northern hill and the saddle (Maps 04-05). The inscriptions are cut on both sides of the passage, but on the southern wall there are very large letters, some with great flourishes and long tails. The characters, though never more than ten or twelve in a sequence, reach a length of 6-7.5m in some cases. These seem to be the largest inscriptions in India.

Although the *śaṅkhalipī* at Udayagiri is not dated, the arrangement of the inscriptions and the sculptures provide a secure chronology, one of the few places where this is so. In the passage, caves or sculptures have been cut into the inscriptions. This can be most clearly seen in Cave 12 where Viṣṇu in his Narasiṁha *avatāra* has been set directly into the shell inscriptions thereby damaging and obliterating part of them. It also seems that the rock above the Narasiṁha has been leveled to accommodate later building of some kind (now missing). This has removed further sections of *śaṅkhalipī*. In terms of chronology, the implications are clear: the inscriptions came before the carved images. This indicates that the passage existed before the Guptas cut the caves in the early fifth century, and that the site was occupied by people who were literate and knew this script. Because the great majority of images were added during a single campaign in the early Gupta period, as will be discussed in Chapter VII, we can be certain that the *śaṅkhalipī* predates the opening years of the fifth century. We can thus conclude that the passage was a centre of considerable cultural and religious interest before the Guptas arrived and that, even before their time, people had added to and modified the site in many ways. The precise nature of the sacred site in pre-Gupta times will be taken up below after other relevant early data has been considered.

R. K. Sharma counted 32 inscriptions at Udayagiri.[23] I found this count difficult to verify as the inscriptions overlapped and merged with each other. It seems unlikely that all the inscriptions were written at one time. Different calligraphic styles, some resembling early Brāhmī, and the others totally abstract, exist on the site. This suggests that

different sets of people with different techniques of writing were using the site and leaving records there. Although we do not know if they co-existed or were chronologically dispersed, it makes greater sense to suppose that different people occupied the site for a long period, perhaps as much as two hundred years.

There are at least five different calligraphic styles at Udayagiri in *śaṅkhalipī*.

The first type always starts with what appears to be a letter standing on its head and ending in a long tail. This is the type that occurs on both sides of the 'passage' and which had images and caves imposed on it. It has also been written upon and therefore, should be logically earlier than the rock-cut caves, iconography and the other shell inscriptions.

The second type consists of a wavy line that curves up and down like a *nāga*. There are no apparent letters and the line just trails away. This type also occurs on the south rock-face of the 'passage' and elsewhere (Photo-05).

The third type is in the shape of *pān* leaf with radiating lines inscribed all around it.

Fourth type is in the shape of a shell and is the most beautiful. They are carefully crafted and are inscribed on the facade of Cave 6. The only inscription of this type, on the northern hill, is carved on the floor of a rock shelter 10m below cave 20 (Photo 06). The most important one appears on the ground prepared for the Sanakānika inscription, which has already drawn our attention. The king whose name is unfortunately damaged calls himself a Sanakānika, probably a clan or family name. It is dated in Gupta year 82 (401-2 CE).

This two-line inscription is engraved on a specially prepared .60 x 1.2 x .45m panel that was large enough to take nine lines of these 15mm high letters. On the space below is shell inscription. On the basis of later copperplates which carry the king's 'signature' below the main part of the record, it seems possible that this is the Sanakānika prince's name written in ornamental script. This inscription was defaced and hacked at a later time. Just about a metre away there is another inscription in the same script.

The fifth type of shell inscription occurs only at four places. It is the largest and the deepest type at Udayagiri and consists of only three to four letters or forms. It appears at prominent places and seems to be acting like a billboard indicating the importance of the particular spot or feature. Three of these monumental types of inscription occur near natural rock shelters (Photo 07). One of these is directly on the 'facade' of a shelter overlooking the large triangular tank that is located at the foot of the northern hill behind the passage (Map 04).

Early Inscriptions and Petroglyphs

During fieldwork, I came across what looks like early Brāhmī inscriptions engraved towards the northern end of the northern hill at Udayagiri.[24] These are just straight lines clubbed together to form what appears to be a *śloka* or a word. A group of these clusters is strung together in a 'sentence'.

The inscriptions occur at two places and are organized in a definitive format, the meaning of which eludes us at present. The lower one occurs in two lines and starts with a mark. The one at a higher level

occurs at the height of 20m above the road level, on the east cliff of the hill (Photo 08). The inscription is incised like Brāhmī with a chisel that leaves a deep dent at the bottom end. At one place the inscription ends with a trident-like petroglyph. These items are located next to a high and inaccessible rock-cut platform with postholes. Postholes also accompany the other inscription site at road level. This indicates that there were wooden structures attached to the side of the mountain which may have served as guard-houses or residences.

On the basis of the paleography of some of the forms Dr H. V. Trivedi, the famous epigraphist, suggested in a personal communication that the incised lines may date to the be beginning of Brāhmī writing in the third to second century BCE.[25] He thinks the bow-shaped and pointer marks resemble similar marks at Chibbernala (Mandsaur district).[26] On the other hand, Dr Ajay Mitra Shastri thinks of them as metre counts or day counts rather than any actual writing.[27] The possible use of counts might be man-day counts or celestial event counts.[28] As this part of the hill was also a large quarry site, man-day count seems one possible explanation. Stone from this site has been used at both the Heliodorus Pillar and Sānchī; so, significant quarrying during early times is distinctly possible.[29] The argument against these views is that the engravings are too well organized visually, like sentences, and that there are relatively few marks for a large quarry operation over time. It is thus difficult to believe that they do not convey some sort of meaning.

The location perhaps provides a clue. The high and low locations were perhaps a lookout and

guardhouse, the marks used to keep track of the watches. This is suggested by the fact that the two locations face Besnagar. Alternatively, if we visualise ancient Udayagiri as a religious rather than royal retreat, we could explain these sites as places where holy men lived, using the marks to assist in their recitation of mantras and other sacred texts.

According to Neumayer, these marks are not inscriptions; he feels that they form an obvious stylistic link with Mesolithic paintings in Central India.[30] Whether the engravings are script or mere symbols, it is generally agreed that they are earlier than Gupta period.

In addition to the markings just described, there are many petroglyphs at Udayagiri. There is an elephant carved on the northern hill and trident-like petroglyphs are etched at many places. On the floor of Cave 20 there are some more petroglyphs engraved on the surface (Photo 11). The exact significance and age of these petroglyphs are subjects that merit detailed study but are beyond the immediate scope of the present thesis.

Rock paintings and petroglyphs have to be seen along with the presence of inscriptions in Shell, Brāhmī and Nāgarī scripts. The only other place where they occur in the immediate region is Badoh, also a Gupta period site. Here, a natural rock shelter is carved with seven *māṭrikās* and Vīrabhadra.[31] These images are accompanied with a fifth century CE Brāhmī inscription in Sanskrit on a specially prepared panel near the images.[32] The inscription records the carving of *māṭrikās* and mentions Mahārāja Jayatsena. The petroglyphs are on one side of the main cave and among

other things show a flying chariot and a rhino. A Śiva *liṅga* engraved here is very similar to the Śiva *liṅga* shown on a *pīṭha* in front of Cave 6 at Udayagiri.

There is a total absence of any Brāhmī inscription of the third or second century BCE at Udayagiri. It is indeed strange that while Sānchī has inscriptions, which run into hundreds, there is total silence at Udayagiri. The inscriptions at Sānchī are generally names of donors and on this basis alone one can speculate that the activity at Udayagiri did not demand donations of any kind and hence precluded inscriptions. This does not preclude human activity at Udayagiri as we have seen that rock shelters were being painted and shell inscriptions were being written prior to the Gupta period. The question therefore remains as to the nature of the activity on the site.

Early lion capital

The single surviving clue to the nature of early activity at Udayagiri comes from the lion capital that was discovered from here. This is the oldest sculpture discovered at Udayagiri and locating the original place where the piece stood is of obvious importance for the history of the site. As it had been removed to Gwalior before Independence, there was no clue to where it was located. An old photograph, however, helped in locating it on site. One of the methods adopted for this study was associating the finds to the spots where they could have been originally. This was done by taking old photographs to the site and with the help of tell-tale signs locating their earlier position. The old photograph from the archives of ASI of the lion capital was used, the only help regarding the old location being the hills shown in the background (Photo 9).[33]

The profile of the hill was identified as that near Began village and on the basis of the rock formations seen beside the capital in the photograph, the precise spot was identified as the top of the 'saddle'. The ledge of the rock where the capital had fallen is also seen in another photograph of the same capital taken with the capital upright. The location was confirmed by the discovery of a small chip of the capital from the spot (Photo 10).

The capital was obviously mounted on a shaft. Fragment of a shaft is currently lying in the passage. It is octagonal, 1.07m in length, with each side measuring 15cms at one end and 16cms at the other. The size and taper is well suited to the capital. In style, the sculpture is stiff, with the shape of the animal very cubic and angular. The front legs are not cut deeply and seem blocky rather than muscular. The lion sits on its haunches and the tail curves out from the side to fall back around the right hind leg. The mane of the lion is shown as straight tufts, as against naturalistic curls of lions in the Sānchī museum.[34]

The abacus is the most interesting part of the sculpture, showing a procession of six beasts: a winged tiger, an elephant, a double humped camel, a winged horse, a winged griffin and a bull. The inverted lotus points to a regional crafting of the capital. The rope-like lines of the petals are imprecise and instead of falling straight down, fall at an angle. They are inclined in all directions and appear confused and unlike leaves of any kind. The monumental sculpture is carved from Udayagiri sandstone and appears to be an attempt by local craftsmen to emulate the earlier lion capital of the Mauryas.

There are four circular holes on the rock ledge where the capital was located. The postholes occur in a row and are spaced in such a way that they seem to mark the entrance to a small *maṇḍapa* which has otherwise disappeared. A short distance away is a low mound which seems to mark the location where the pillar originally stood. A much larger archaeological mound about 10m to the south points to the presence of a temple. On the side of the mound is an *āmalakā*, the serrated circular disc placed on top of the spires of northern Indian temples from the circa seventh century CE. The *āmalakā* is of tenth century or eleventh century and may have been put there during the enlargement or repair of the temple. Excavation or clearing of the site would be needed to reveal the nature and the date of the temple.[35] It seems to be of considerable antiquity as there is much crumbling brick on the mound. Brick as a building material for temples and monasteries was not used in central India after the seventh century.

There are no inscriptions on the capital nor are there any inscriptions on the surviving portion of the shaft. In the absence of any inscription or other historical evidence, the dating of the sculpture is difficult to determine. Williams, dates it to second century CE[36]; Willis puts it along with the posts of Sānchī 2 and 3 and calls it the work of local craftsmen.[37] While it is true that the capital shows some parallels to Sānchī 2, it clearly predates the Heliodorus column in stylistic terms. It may therefore be the earliest surviving monumental sculpture in the region. At the present stage of study it is difficult to say what this single lion capital on an inverted lotus with images of a flying tiger, elephant, double humped camel, flying horse, flying griffin and a bull represents. When viewed with other remains the

possibility of it representing a Buddhist theme is not very high.

Cunningham found the capital during his exploration of Udayagiri and he made a fleeting reference to the piece without describing it; it is only from inference that we know he is referring to the capital in question. The capital was acquired by the Gwalior Museum in 1927-28 along with other objects from the area. Cunningham visited Udayagiri during his tours of the area in 1875-76 and wrote about the archaeological remains on top of the southern hilltop, where he found remains of 'Buddhist origin'.[38] The study of the objects shows that what Cunningham thought to be Buddhist could have belonged to any religion. They were part of the design and ideas prevalent during a certain period and were employed by people of all religious beliefs. Therefore to understand the meaning of these objects clues have to be taken from other items in the immediate area. We have the lion capital and the octagonal shaft as the starting point.

Columns and Capitals in the neighbourhood

We have evidence of many columns in the Vidiśā and Sānchī area from the general period of the Udayagiri lion. The *dhamma stambha* of Aśoka was the first, and dates to the third century BCE. This column and other like it were placed in front of stūpas and were mounted by the 'wheel of *dhamma*' carried by four lions guarding the four cardinal directions. Study reveals that the Buddhist *Saṅghas* chose prominent spots for building *stūpas* and monasteries. Examples of Sānchī, Andher, Bhojpur-Pipālia particularly points to this fact.

To understand why these *stūpas* were located at such prominent spots Shaw looks at the dynamics of the monastery and the relic cult.[39] She argues that surveillance and safety of the relics were the prime considerations behind choosing such spots where the *stūpa* also acted like a lighthouse radiating rays of *dhamma* to surrounding lands. This goes well with the belief that the relics are a living entity where *stūpas* are not considered as burial mounds but the resting-place of the Buddha while in the state of *nirvāṇa*. Hence the safety of the relics became a concern of prime importance to the *Saṅgha*. Relics were also something over which wars were fought. Scenes on the Sānchī *toraṇa* (south gate lowest architrave) show the first war of relics fought immediately after the *mahāparīnirvāṇa*. The second war for relics was only just prevented when Aśoka opened seven original mounds or *stūpas* to distribute the relics into 84,000 *stūpas* that he had planned to make. It was believed that relics had their own volition and would disappear (or make arrangement to move) if not accorded proper worship.[40] So, along with care and worship, surveillance and proper care formed an important aspect of the relic cult.

Although Buddhist sites and centres of relic worship were signalled with pillars, this does not appear to be a consideration at Udayagiri. The lion pillar in question was placed at the saddle, a curiously low and inconspicuous spot. The column and capital could have been put at a more prominent position such as the northern hilltop. What could have been the reason for such an inconspicuous location? A tentative answer, or at least a move toward an answer, can be provided by looking at nearby pillars and cult spots.

A second early pillar, datable to before circa 80 BCE, is that of Heliodorus to the north of Besnagar across the river Bes. It was one of the eight pillars planted in front of the Vāsudeva temple.[41] The inscription on the shaft refers to the pillar as Garuḍa *dhvaja* consecrated in honour of Vāsudeva by the ambassador Heliodorus.[42] The shaft is octagonal, then sixteen sided, and then thirty-two sided before it becomes circular at the top. The abacus is still in situ. It shows pecking geese with a floral motif in between.[43] Part of the abacus is broken, but a 25 x 25cms tenon on the top points towards a missing image that went with it.

During the course of my study the capital of this important column could be traced to the Gwalior Museum. This depicts the claws of a bird perched on top of a *nāga*, the end of the *nāga* can be seen on the side (Photos 12, 13 & 14). It has a square base of 53 x 57 x 27cms with a *vedikā* carved on its sides. The claws are monolithic to the base with a toe pointing backwards and three webbed claws pointing towards the front. Both the claws have a 10cm diameter hole on the top where the body of the bird must have been attached.[44] Tāla *dhvajas* (fan-palm capitals) and Makara *dhvajas* (Makara capitals), also associated with Vāsudeva cult, were discovered from the same site in the early twentieth century. The motifs of the capitals indicated a combined worship of the five heroes of the Vṛṣṇi clan, an early form of Vaiṣṇava faith in which Kṛṣṇa is worshipped as an equal along with his brothers.[45]

The cult of the columns did not just end there but extended also to the followers of Yakṣas. Yakṣas were local deities usually associated with a specific place and frequently connected with wealth. They were

supposed to have supernatural powers and were sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent. A Yakṣa *āyatana* (shrine) appears to have existed near Vāsudeva temple site. Although no railings have been recovered, large images of Kubera Yakṣa and three Yakṣīs were discovered from the vicinity of Heliodorus pillar. Kubera Yakṣa was found in the river Betwā near Heliodorus Pillar at Besnagar.[46] Measuring about 3.50m excluding the pedestal, it is the biggest Yakṣa image discovered in India.[47] *Stambhas* accompanied these large statues and one of the capitals discovered was a 1.7m high capital in the shape of a *kalpadruma* or wish-giving tree. It matches the Kubera in size and symbolism and was probably placed in his *āyatana*. Now in Calcutta museum, the capital shows a tree in a railing with coins, *kalaśa*, *śaṅkha* and other jewels falling from its branches. All these items are attributes of Kubera as the god of wealth.

The Udayagiri lion pillar, however, did not form part of these beliefs, as there are no 'wealth' symbols carved on it. Excluding a Buddhist, early Vaiṣṇava or Yakṣa association, one can turn to other areas for a possible meaning. One likely meaning is indicated by the fact that Udayagiri falls on the line of the Tropic of Cancer. The tropic, due to natural oscillation in the earth's axis, is always moving. At present it lies to the south of the site, but in the Gupta period was some kilometers to the north. We have no historical documentation about how the Tropic was determined in the second century BCE, but we can assume that simple observations with the naked eye would have been able to determine that the Tropic lay very near or indeed exactly on Udayagiri. This gives the location strategic importance from the point of view of celestial observation, an aspect that was exploited in the

developments taken up during Gupta period, as discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI. The later association of Udayagiri with Sun worship and the Trīvikrama of Viṣṇu suggests an early antecedent of association with the sun. The animals on the abacus may thus represent constellations, however in the absence of astronomical texts from the first two centuries BCE known to be from central India we can only speculate as to which constellations or celestial events these animals refer.

Textual references to early Udayagiri

In one of the Jātakas there is a story which throws some light on Vidiśā before Gupta times.[48] The story mentions a proud Brahmin named Jātimantā who lived hard by the city of Vettavati on the banks of the river of that name. This story is added as an after thought to a much longer story of *Cāndāla* Matangā located in Benaras. Buddha in his previous births as *Cāndāla* Matangā humbled this brahmin by first making his abode upstream and while there throwing tooth sticks into the river where the brahmin used to take a bath. This irritated the brahmin and the altercation between the two led Matangā to move downstream. Later, Matangā prevented the sun from rising and relented to the request of the people only after humbling of the brahmin.

Although seemingly of little importance, this story has certain key elements which relate to Vidiśā in general and Udayagiri in particular:

1. Jātimantā, a Brahmin stayed near the river Vettavati outside the city by that name.
1. Matangā, a low caste *Cāndāla*, made his abode upstream to where the Brahmin stayed.

2. Matangā prevented the sun from rising but relented when the populace was thrown into panic.

The first two points indicate the relationship of Satdhārā to Udayagiri. The former is upstream to the latter. But the legend is supposed to have happened much before Udayagiri was developed into a large Vaiṣṇava centre. Therefore, the first two points can be read to mean that there was a religious Brahmin staying at Udayagiri when Buddhism came to the area. Second is that the sun was prevented from rising by Matangā which caused concern and panic. This can be interpreted to mean that Matangā (that is Buddha in his previous birth) had power over the sun. In other stories the Buddha controls fire-breathing *nāgas* in their temples and prevents the sacred fires of the Kasyapas from lighting, episodes depicted in the Sānchī reliefs. Essentially it means that the Buddha has power over particular deities and rituals. The same is shown in the Matangā story where the Buddha can control the sun, an object of worship from earliest times. The geographical detail of the story points to the Sun being a special focus of brahminically controlled cults in the Vidiśā area and the long association of Sun worship with Udayagiri points towards a knowledge of this in Buddhist sources.

Udayagiri is associated with Sun worship even today and on every *navami* of *śukla pakṣa* (bright fortnight) of the *Kārtik māha* (around the month of October-November), flags from the temples of Vidiśā are taken around the hill in procession. This walk has many stops on the way where worship is offered to the two river goddesses, Śiva in various form such as Bhoramdeva and Kāladeva, Viṣṇu in his various forms

such as Narasimhā and Varāha, and finally to the Sun god. Offerings to each god is made at the specific spot chosen for the purpose. It is at Cave 1 that offerings are made to the Sun god. An image was carved into the living rock in this cave but was erased at some point in the past. It is this image that is presently the point of contention between the Jains and the Hindus. Jains have installed a twelfth century image of Tīrthānkara in the cave sometime in the 1950s as an assertion of their claim to the identity of the image. Hindus on the other hand claim that it is the image of the Sun god and continue to hold yearly worship in praise of the god. Inscriptions of ninth-tenth century point towards a history of Sun worship in the region and mention is made of a large temple of Sun god called Bhāillasvāmi.[49] As mentioned in Chapter I the name Bhelsā or Bhilsā is derived from Bhāillasvāmi.

Religious landscape of Vidiśā region prior to the Guptas

The pre-Gupta scene of Udayagiri would be incomplete if mention is not made of the large irrigation works constructed in the vicinity of Sānchī. The earthen bund between the hills of Nāgourī and Sānchī was made to dam the rainwater for irrigation purposes. Remains of an irrigation canal near the Heliodorus pillar show that the technology was not confined to just making large reservoirs but extended to carrying water to desired destinations.[50]

Conceptually these works were extensions of what was represented iconographically at Sānchī, Besnagar and the Heliodorus pillar site. They all represented abundance, fertility and the sap of life. The mammoth

Yakṣa which was once placed near the confluence of the Betwā and Bes is the manifestation of this fecund landscape. The precinct of this god was outside the formal boundary of the city of Besnagar and was located somewhere near the Heliodorus column. Only a left hand holding a cup (with a missing body), tells us that there should be other colossal Yakṣa images that await discovery. This broken arm is lying near a temple at Besnagar and highlights a key point, namely that when we try to recover the conceptual position of ancient Udayagiri we need to remember that the immediate area was populated by powerful gods and goddesses whose cult spots and influence have now entirely vanished. These cult spots seem to have been once carefully demarcated. At the Heliodorus pillar railings around the temple site demarcated the sacred from the secular. The railings were of two types, one open like those at Sānchī and the other closed with panels of stone inserted in the pillars to completely seal off the divide. Both these types of railings were used later to demarcate sacred places at Udayagiri. It thus appears that the concept of temple precincts (*āyatanas*) was not confined to the Yakṣas alone.

Nāgas, part of the cult related to water cosmology, are represented in the Udayagiri area by free standing images at Nāgouri hill, Andher and other sites. The only surviving column capital with nāga image is from Ferozpur. This may be related to the Nāga dynasty at Vidīśā. Evidence for Ganapati Nāga and Bhīma Nāga can be found in the abundant coin finds from the mounds of Besnagar. The Purāṇas called them worshippers of Śiva who carried Śivaliṅgas on their shoulders and were also called Bhāraśivas. They are said to have conducted an Aśvamedha and had their capital at Vidīśā. Other than the copper coins there are no archaeological

remains that are attributed to them. However, it is possible that many of the shell inscriptions at Udayagiri belong to their time. Outside Malwā, only some remains from Jankhat near Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh are ascribed to the Nagās.[51] The Nagā families, centred in Mathurā, Pawāyā and Kotwāl as well as Vidiśā presented a major political threat to the Guptas. It can be no coincidence that the Guptas, after conquering them and taking Nāga princess in marriage adopted Garuḍa clutching a nāga as their royal emblem. The many nāga sculptures of pre-Gupta date around Udayagiri. Some perhaps directly related to the Nāga rulers thus made Udayagiri a perfect site for the most powerful image of Nāga submission, the great Varāha in cave 5. As we will see in Chapter III there is also evidence that Garuḍa imagery was also introduced to Udayagiri by the Guptas.

[1] Inscription in Cave 7 at Udayagiri; Fleet, *CII* Vol III, number 3, pp. 27-31.
[2] I have been fortunate to have with me on several occasions the company of distinguished specialist Erwin Neumayer, while visiting some of the sites. Neumayer is the author of many books on rock shelter art and has been working on the subject since early seventies. He is based in Austria but walks to rock shelter sites across the country, every year for a few months. I am thankful to him for introducing me to the beauty, antiquity and richness of the rock art in India. I also benefited greatly by the company of Emma Read who has been engaged in research at the neighboring rock shelters site of Kharbaī 30kms south west of Udayagiri.
[3] Shankar Tiwari, Twenty-Five Years of Rock-Painting Exploration in the Betwā Source Region- A Re-appraisal in K. K. Chakravarty (ed.), *Rock Art of India, Paintings and Engravings* (Bhopal, 1984), pp. 228-238.
[4] The thematic division is based on personal visits to the rock shelter sites mentioned above and classification of the themes by Neumayer.
[5] Jan Gonda, *The Meaning of the Sanskrit term Āyatana,* (Madras, 1969).
[6] Bhandārkar, ASI AR (1914-15)
[7] Erwin Neumeyar, *Lines on Stone: The Prehistoric Rock Art of India.* (Delhi, 1993), pp. 222-225.
[8] Ibid., p. 264.
[9] Alexander Cunningham, *ASIR* 10 (1874-77), p. 47.
[10] The division of time is taken from M.D.Khare, 'Excavated Remains from the Rock-Shelters in Madhya-Pradesh' in *Rock-Art of India*. The time is calculated in BCE. Upper Palaeolithic (c. 20,000-10,000). Mesolithic (c. 10,000-2,500). Chalcolithic (c. 2,500-600).
[11] Neumeyar confirmed this observation during a combined visit to the hill site May 2001.
[12] At Āhemadpur near Vidīśā, the rock shelters contain the largest deposit of painted shell inscriptions and at one place a post Aśokan Brāhmī inscription is painted on the lintel of a rock shelter.
[13] Āhemadpur has remains of a reconstructed late Gupta temple on top of the hill.
[14] Shankar Tiwari postulates that the painters of the rock shelters were Chalcolithic men dwelling below the hill, practicing agriculture. He supports this interpretation by discovery of 5.4mts of Chalcolithic deposit below the hill at Pipaliy Lorka.
[15] Wakankar, Bhimbetka and Dating of Indian Rock-Paintings in *Rock-Art of India*, p. 49.
[16] Neumayer, *Lines on Stone*, p. 55: fig. 79.
[17] B. N. Mukherjee, The So-called Shell-Script in R. K. Sharma(ed.), *Studies in the Shell Script,* (Delhi, 1990), p. 22; Richard Solomon, New Shankhlipi (Shell Character) Inscriptions, *Studien Zur Indologie und Iranistik* (1998), pp. 109-158.
[18] This style of writing is very widespread and has been found from Akhnūr in Jammū and Kashmir to Sandūr in the Karnātaka State, and from Jūnāgarh in Gujarāt to Susūniā in West Bengal. The biggest collection however, exists in the state of Madhya Pradeśh (M.P.) or Central India. Śhankar Tiwari, notes that the distribution of the Shell inscription is located at sites which were on the ancient trade routes passing through Vidiśā, Sānchī, Bhopāl, Bhojpur, Nandūr and Makoriā region. Vidiśā stood at the crossroad of Dakśinapatha and Uttarapatha, as mentioned in

Chapter I and therefore it is not surprising that it should have such a large collection of inscriptions in this script.

[19] Bhandārkar, ASI AR (1914-15).

[20] I saw shell inscriptions at Mansar, a Vākāṭakā site near Nāgpur in Vidarbha.

[21] The script appears not only at well-known Gupta temple sites but was observed by the author at the rock shelters of Bhīmbêtkā (Raisen district, M.P.), Ahemadpur (Vidīśā district, M.P.), Bhopāl, Manser (near Nagpur, Maharāśtra) and Sañchī. Shell inscriptions are reported from Guphā-Māser (Vidīśā district, M.P.), Makoriā (near Bhopāl) and many other places around Bhopal and Vidīśā.

[22] According to S. K. Pāndey (1990) a professor from Sāgar University who has worked extensively on rock paintings, the Śāivites occupying the shelters were positively aware of the script. He cites the example of Dharampuri hill rock shelters in Bhopal which were occupied by the Śāivites and who wrote in Shell script on their walls. He claims to have read an inscription found painted at Bhapel (Sāgar district, M.P.). The inscription has seven letters decorated with floral designs. It reads, according to him, as *Śrīman Ravīchandra*. Despite this it seems unlikely that the shell inscriptions are exclusively Śāivite and the script, as noted above, remains fundamentally undeciphered.

[23] R. K. Sharma (ed.), *Studies in the Shell Script*, p.109.

[24] Following a hint given by Dr Narayan Vyas, ASI Bhopal Circle, I took a team to study a series of inscriptions at Udayagiri that had not come to the notice of the scholars till now.

[25] Personal communication (10.8.2000).

[26] Chibbernala in Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh is a rock shelter site with a big deposit of paintings in them.

[27] He visited the site with me when he made that observation.

[28] Chandrashekhar Gupta, Head of the Ancient History department at Nagpur University, thought they were probably the man-day count of workers to calculate their wages. Neumeyar who visited the site with me seems to agree with the view that they are counts of some kind.

[29] Bhandārkar, (1914) & Marshall, (1932).

[30] Personal communication, (site visit).

[31] Harle, *Gupta Sculpture*.

[32] Gwalior Archaeological Dept. Report (Samvat 1982), p. 12.

[33] The sculpture is illustrated in Willis, Buddhist Reliquaries, fig. 29. The capital is currently in Gurjari Mahal Museum at Gwalior.

[34] Four lion capital of Aśoka from Sānchī currently in Sānchī museum.

[35] Willis, 'Inscriptions from Udayagiri', *South Asian Studies 17 (2001)*.

[36] Williams, The Recut capital, *Artibus Asiae* 35 (1973).

[37] Willis, Buddhist Reliquaries, p. 58.

[38] He also found remains on top of the saddle and the northern hill. The list of objects that he found needs to be examined carefully as it was the first record of the hill and hence set the tone of further research. I list out the objects as mentioned in his report. 1. A pillar with medallions in front that he thought was of Buddhist origins. 2. A complete rail bar. This led him to the conclusion that there must have been a Buddhist stupa at Udayagiri. 3. An abacus of a pillar ornamented with Vedika motif. 4. Some bell-capital pilasters from a very early temple 5. A bell capital of a large pillar surmounted by a lion.
On the northern hilltop he found shaft of a pillar and
The Lion capital that was hurled to a distance and mutilated by the fall. I could trace all the objects mentioned by Cunningham excepting for item (4) where he mentions some bell-capital pilasters. The pillar

with medallions that he mentions in (1) can be seen in the park to the west of the hills. The pillar is the type that was in use during 2nd -1st Century BCE. It was used at Sañchī stupa 2 and at Heliodorus pillar site, as discovered by D.R.Bhandārkar during his excavations in 1914-15. A complete rail bar that Cunningham found is part of this type of railing and can still be seen near the school below Cave 1. It does not have any inscription. The abacus that he mentioned can also be seen in the park. The abacus was mounted by a capital. It contains the vedika motif but unlike any abacus found so far, the bars of the vedika are decorated with rosettes. Although rosettes are Gupta period design and can be seen on the jambs at Udaygiri Cave 4, these rosettes are more casually drawn and belong to 1st to 2nd century BCE. The shaft he discovered on the northern hilltop is still in situ. The accompanying capital can be seen at Gwalior Museum. As we shall see in Part 2 of Chapter III, this pillar had nakśatṛa cakra and was meant for astronomical purposes. A remark is called for on Cunningham's finds on the southern hill. The hill has remains of building plinths. A pattern would emerge only if some excavation is done there. As it stands today, it is very difficult to say what they represent. Stupa remains can however, be ruled out as the form of a stupa can be easily inferred and the mound itself shows no sign of having this shape.

[39] Julia Shaw, 'The Sacred Landscape' in *Buddhist Reliquaries,* p. 29. The spatial relationships that exist between the Buddhist monuments and the landscape were understood by moving around the landscape rather than just depending on the textual accounts. I am thankful to her for sharing so many of her insights on the Buddhist remains at Saṇchī and its sacred geography with me.

[40] Ibid., p. 15

[41] Khare, 'Discovery of A Viṣṇu temple Near The Heliodorus Pillar, Besnagar, District Vidiśā', *Lalit Kala* 13, pp.21-28.

[42] Richard Salomon, 'A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages', in *Indian Epigraphy,* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 265-7.

[43] The inscription mentions Heliodorus son of Dion, and an emissary of Antialkidas from the court of Taxila, who had come to the court of Kasiputra Bhagabhadra and who consecrated this pillar in honour of Vāsudeva. Bhagabhadra was identified as the ninth Śunga king and the date of the pillar was calculated to 150 BCE on the basis of the coins issued by Antialkidas from Taxila.

[44] The bird can easily be identified as Garuḍa on the basis of its association with the nāga. Garuḍas were depicted in their bird form till the Gupta period. In Sānchī stupa 2 medallion Garuḍa is shown holding a nāga in its beak. From Bharhut comes the most interesting image of a Garuḍa standard shown in Ludwig Bachhofer, *Early India Sculpture* (Delhi, 1973), plate 22. A female rider is shown holding a staff with the image of the bird on the top. The bird has a male torso and is shown perched on top of an inverted lotus with a ring of bead and reel. The inspiration of the dhvaja stambhas in stone must have come from these processional banners.

[45] J.N.Banerjee, *Development of Iconography,* (Calcutta: 1956), p. 393.

[46] R.C.Agrawala, 'Unpublished Yaksha-Yakshi statues from Besnagar'. *Lalit Kala* 14.

[47] Kubera Yakṣa was discovered by Sri Raj Mal Madavaiyya towards the end of 1952. It hails from Besnagar and can now be seen as No. 27 in the Archaeology Museum at Vidīśā.

[48] Mātaṅga-Jātaka, (Book XV. Vīsati-nipāta) No. 497 in *The Jātaka Or Stories of the Buddhas' Births,* Vols. 4-6, ed. E. B. Cowell (Delhi, reprint, 1997).
[49] Willis, *Buddhist Reliquaries*
[50] Bhandarkar, ASI AR (1913-14) and (1914-15).
[51] Williams, *Gupta India,* p. 17.

CHAPTER III

UDAYAGIRI DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD: INTRODUCTION

Candragupta Vikramāditya II (circa 380-414 CE) of the Gupta dynasty is closely associated with the hill of Udayagiri, a fact borne out by the inscriptions in Caves 6 and 7.[1] Candragupta II came from the lineage of the Imperial Guptas and was the son of Samudragupta (circa 345-80 CE) whose victories are recorded on the Mauryan period column at Allahabad. Harisena, his minister, composed this 33-line posthumous inscription of Samudragupta, better known as Allahabad *praśastī*.[2] It records the lineage of Samudragupta to his great grandfather Śrī Gupta, his grandfather Ghaṭotkaca and his father Mahārājādhirāja Candragupta I (circa 320-45 CE). It also mentions the Licchavi princess Mahādevī Kumāradevī as his mother. This marriage of Candragupta I with the Licchavi princess brought the Guptas into prominence and gold coins were issued depicting the king and the queen inscribed with the legend *Licchavyaḥ*.[3] The Licchavis had been the rulers of Vaiśāli in the Buddha's time and are mentioned in Pāli literature.

Candragupta I initiated a new era in circa CE 320 on his accession to the throne.[4] A period of two centuries following this witnessed unprecedented artistic activity in India under the kingship of Samudragupta (circa 345-

375), Candragupta Vikramāditya (circa 375-413 CE), Kumaragupta (circa 413-55 CE) and Skandagupta (circa 455-67 CE).

Although the Gupta period is commonly referred to as 'the golden age' of India little is known about the Imperial Guptas and their rule. Inscriptions and coins are the major source-material for determining the political history of India and in the case of the Imperial Guptas they are disturbingly few. Fleet lists 81 inscriptions in his Gupta inscription volume of CII. Of these, only about twenty or so are related to the Imperial Guptas and of these only a few can be directly linked to them. The origins of the Guptas are obscure. More is known about Samudragupta and the extent of his kingdom, mostly on the basis of Allahabad praśastī.

My study has shown that Candragupta II was the force behind the development at Udayagiri hills. Under his patronage an older sacred site was much reworked. Unlike Sānchī that has 800 inscriptions of pious donors but none of kings, the evidence points to direct royal involvement at Udayagiri with Candragupta II shaping the hill and its iconography.[5] The development follows a well thought out design scheme and study shows that additions were not random or arbitrary. The development works on many levels: artistic, architectural, religious, astronomical, political and mythical. Remains of fortification on the northern hilltop, an elephant path leading to the summit and a single point of entry to the site show that surveillance and control were also operating principles. The Imperial intent is also seen in the positions of the main images and epigraphs on the site. Indeed, Udayagiri

has the unique distinction of being the only site where the actual presence of Candragupta II is recorded by epigraphic evidence.

The site, as we will see below, is replete with expressions of Candragupta II's self-image. Therefore, understanding the character and personality of Candragupta II is important for the understanding of Udayagiri. It also works the other way and we shall see how religion and art were subjected to subtle manipulation by the king to project the image he wanted to build of himself. Therefore, his family background, personality and what he thought of himself become important for understanding how Udayagiri worked and derived its meaning.

Samudragupta chose Candragupta II for the throne out of all his sons. The inscriptions of Samudragupta at Eran and Bihār and the inscriptions of Skandagupta at Bhitari use the word '*tat-parigṛhītena*' in respect of Candragupta II.[6] Rāmagupta is supposed, by some scholars, to have preceded Candragupta II to the throne, but he may have been only a governor at Vidiśā. Copper coins with a legend of Rāmagupta were found from Eran and Vidiśā, showing he had considerable authority in Malwā.[7] Rāmagupta, whose definite historical existence is confirmed by the three Jain images from Besnagar, is also mentioned in Sanskrit play as having surrendered his wife, Dhruvasvāminī, to the Śakas when confronted with defeat.[8] Candragupta II's presence at Vidiśā is attributed to his valiant rescue of Dhruvasvāminī from the clutches of the Śaka adversary. He penetrated the Śaka camp in disguise, killed the Śaka king and saved the queen whom he then married. How much truth resides in the story is not known. However, some elements

of the story are historical such as the fact that Rāmagupta was a king at Vidiśā, and the Śaka rulers of Gujarāt and Kathiāwar, who had made their capital at Ujjain, were defeated by the great conqueror Candragupta II. Candragupta II is also known to have had two wives: Dhruvadevī and Kuberanāgā.[9] If Dhruvadevī is the same as Dhruvasvāminī of Rāmagupta, which is very likely, she was queen at Vidiśā and may have stayed here even after the demise of Rāmagupta and her subsequent marriage with Candragupta II.[10] This point will be taken up later to establish the relationship to Udayagiri of a seal found from Basarh (Photo 42).[11]

One of the most important aspects of Candragupta II was his identification as Vikramāditya. This title occurs in his 'Chatra Type' of coins where it is stated in the legend that 'Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Candragupta, after conquering the Earth, conquers Heaven by his righteous deeds and calls himself Vikramāditya'.[12] On his silver coins, issued in his newly conquered territories in western India, the title of Vikramāditya is repeated again.[13] He assumes the title of Siṃha-Vikrama on his Lion-slayer Type of coins, while on the Horseman Type, the legend on the reverse is Ajita-Vikramaḥ.[14]

The earliest textual reference to Vikramāditya is in Bṛhatkathā by Guṇāḍhya.[15] The original work is lost to us and is therefore difficult to date. It was, however, well known in the seventh century CE. The fame of Vikramāditya was so great that the name came to be regarded as a title and it was assumed by many Kṣatriya kings in later times. The archaeological evidence in the form of coins favor Candragupta II as the earliest claimant of the title.[16]

Even if he is not the Vikramāditya of Vikrama Samvat that began in 58 BCE, the fact that he adopted the title shows the qualities he cherished and wished to be associated with. The legends of Vikramāditya revolve around the qualities of courage, charity, justice, truth, sacrifice, and the patronage of art and music. The special quality of Vikramāditya's life was the defeat of the Mlechchas (barbarians) which is noted by the Bṛhatkathā.[17] Adoption of the Vikramāditya title by Candragupta II was not a mere boast: he tried to live up to the image through his victories over foreign kings and his rescue of Dhruvasvāminī.

There is, however, another aspect to the Vikramāditya title. The word is a combination of Vikrama and Āditya, the Sun of valour. Trīvikrama is indicated in the *Ṛgveda* but not as an *avatāra*. In the *Ṛgveda* Trīvikrama is referred to as 'Viṣṇu, the unconquerable preserver,' who 'strode over this universe and in three places planted his step'. The early commentators understood the three places to be the *pṛithvī*, the *vāyu*, and *ākāśa*. One commentator Aurnavābha, took a more philosophical view of the matter, and interpreted 'the three steps' as being the three positions of the sun at its rising, culmination, and setting, thus linking Vikrama as Āditya or Viṣṇu as sun god.[18] This aspect of Viṣṇu as the Sun god is associated with astronomical observations and at Udayagiri it is this aspect of (Trī) Vikram-āditya which Candragupta II sought to use for his own metaphorical representations, as we will see below.

The legend of Trīvikrama is also linked with the Vāmana *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. In the *tretā-yuga*, the *daitya*

king Bāli had, by his devotion and austerities acquired dominion over the three worlds, so that the gods were shorn of their power and dignity. To remedy this, Viṣṇu took birth as a diminutive son of Kaśyapa and Aditī. The dwarf appeared before Bāli and begged of him as much land as he could step over in three strides. The generous monarch complied with the request. Viṣṇu then grew in size till he could cover the three worlds in three strides. Viṣṇu took two strides over heaven and earth; but respecting the virtues of Bāli, he then stopped, leaving the dominion of *pātāla*, the infernal regions, to Bāli.[19]

The Vāmana legend is set on the Pawāyā lintel at a scene of a sacrifice. Even Bāli's name invokes the Vedic tradition, *'bali'* being the balls of food that are a common feature of domestic and other rituals. The legend thus shows Viṣṇu completely overpowering or overstepping the efficacy of the ancient sacrifices. Similarly Varāha is frequently named *yajñavarāha* and texts such as the *Viṣṇusmṛti* describe how each part of the boar corresponds to part of the Vedic sacrifice. So whether as Vāmana, Trīvikrama or Varāha, we see Viṣṇu absorbing and surpassing (but not, it should be noted, destroying) Vedic ritual practice. The whole process is clearly expressed in the *Bhāgavad Gitā*.

The legends are allegorically depicted in carvings on the rocks and in the site as a whole. The epithet Vikramāditya indicated that Candragupta was drawing an analogy between his own acts as king and Viṣṇu's Trīvikrama, the heroic three strides by which Viṣṇu redeemed the world from evil forces. Conquering the two worlds with good deeds are thoughts expressed in

inscription and legends directly related to Candragupta II. The inscriptions at Udayagiri, the Iron Pillar currently at Mehrauli (Delhi) and Chattra type of coins are three examples that clearly project this image of the king.

The Udayagiri Cave 7 inscription by Vīrasena refers to Candragupta II's victorious campaign undertaken for the conquest of the whole earth (*kṛṣṭna-pṛthivī-jaya*).[20] While his Chattra Type coin have a legend expressing this sentiment as noted above, this image of the king as the conqueror of two worlds is most clearly indicated in the Iron Pillar at Mehrauli that was written posthumously. [21] The epigraph states: 'The King who after having conquered the earth, traverses the heavens and glows on the land where the remnant of his great zeal of energy does not leave the earth like the burnt out forest fire that does not leave the earth, like Agnī on earth, Indra or Vāyu in the atmosphere and Sūrya in the sky'.[22]

The association of Candragupta II's image of himself as (Tri) Vikram-āditya and the development at Udayagiri is not very apparent; until we realize that Udayagiri may not have been the original name of the hill. There is an absence of Udayagiri as a place name in inscriptions of the Gupta period or before, an especially notable gap given the rich epigraphic corpus in the region.[23] The earliest record that mentions the name Udayagiri comes from Bhilsā and belongs to eleventh century CE. The record, mentioned recently by Willis, relates to a Sun temple.[24] D. C. Sircar was able to make out '*ambaracuḍāmanī*', the 'crest-jewel of the sky', from this damaged inscription. This is a poetic description of the

sun. Also visible is the word '*vihaya*', open space or sky. Along with the invocation '*om namaḥ suryāya*', there is little doubt that this damaged record relates to the Sun temple. Mention of the word '*Udayagiri*', literally 'sunrise mountain' in the inscription as proposed by Willis, a direct reference to Udayagiri. His proposal that the temple of Bhāillasvāmi may have once stood on the hill seems plausible and has been accepted for the purpose of this study.[25]

The presence of Sun temple at Udayagiri hill is in keeping with the tradition of sun-worship that is associated with the hill as described above. It also links Viṣṇu Trīvikrama to the site that has close associations with Candragupta II and his Vikramāditya legends. The worship of Viṣṇupadas, the feet of Viṣṇu associated with his victorious strides, is closely linked to Udayagiri and the vicinity (Photo 26). In Cave 19 there is a eleventh century CE inscription recording the worship of Viṣṇupada in the shrine.[26] A long history of Viṣṇupada worship is known at Udayagiri, the earliest archaeological remains being *pada* on a brick discovered in the park to the immediate west of Udayagiri during one of my walks in the area (Photo 28). The brick has been dated by the ASI as belonging to second century BCE. Of about the same date is the Heliodorus pillar inscription which refers to three steps.[27] Near the pillar a sacred spot known as 'Caran Tīrth' at the confluence of the rivers Betwā and Bes has many Viṣṇupadas under worship, the earliest belonging to ninth century CE and the last donated in the twentieth century CE. Pillars from an early sixth-century temple are embedded on the *ghāts* and may have belonged to a late Gupta temple on this spot (Photo 27). The tradition of

worship of these *padas* continues even today and can be seen every morning when those who have come to bathe in the river place flowers and other offerings on the feet.

Śītalānāth *padas* are kept in Cave 20 at Udayagiri. Śītalānāthjī, the tenth Tīrthānkara of the Jains, is believed to have attained enlightenment at this spot. The *padas* are however, a later addition in this cave that contains a dated Jain inscription of 426 CE during Kumāragupta's reign.

The Vaiṣṇava imagery that we see at Udayagiri is not separate from other aspects of the hill such as sun worship or astronomical observation and is an expression of conjoint ideas and thoughts. The Sanskrit use of double-meaning and verbal ornament helps us understand how these phenomenons existed side by side. In Sanskrit, as also in Hindi, one word is sometimes used deliberately to express several ideas simultaneously. They may be totally different from one another. The meaning in such a case is based on the context in which the word is read. Similarly, the construction at Udayagiri is conjoined with multiple meanings and a meaning depends on the context in which it is seen. As this study shows, these different applications of the same site are not mutually exclusive or detrimental to each other, but rather contain simultaneously within one body a range of meanings which are ultimately complementary. The different meanings can be seen separately only when viewed through different prisms, although the prisms are, alas, cracked because so much is missing or has been destroyed since the fifth century. We may have to look at these aspects separately and examine each one of them in relation to the 'construction' at

Udayagiri. This 'construction' includes not just architectural and structural remains but also carvings, inscriptions, open spaces, landscape and all that falls within the boundary of the sacred precinct.

Embellishment, modification and construction at Udayagiri is concentrated mainly around the passage that cuts across the hill from east to west, at the place where the northern hill meets the saddle (Map 65). This passage is important principally because:

1. It is the only path to the west of the hills.

2. It is the main approach to the temple on the northern hilltop and to the remains en route to it.

3. It is also the main approach to the saddle top, where a temple may have existed when Candragupta II arrived on the scene. As noted in Chapter II, the single lion capital was discovered from here and must have been placed on top of a column.

It appears that the passage existed in its natural form before it was enlarged to its present state. The northern side of the passage was left untouched while caves were cut on the southern side and the gap enlarged. The rock surface was then roughened in a manner that was typical of Gupta period, for example on the facing stone of the temple on the northern hilltop. This was deliberately done to enhance the bond of plaster to the stone surface. Small patches of plaster in Cave 8 (now partially collapsed) confirm this intention of the builders. The white smooth surface was then painted in red ochre, as shown by traces discovered during close

examination. The possibility is that there were paintings here in the Ajantā style. This is in keeping with the importance of the passage that may have acted as an entrance to the sacred area that included the northern hill and the saddle. It is also in keeping with the sudden surge of painting during the fifth century, the sole surviving examples being Ajantā and Sigiriya in Sri Lanka.

It is suggested here that the enlargement of the passage to form an angle of 51° to the north-south axis was part of the larger astronomical scheme. The carving of Anantaśāyana with his feet to the west was part of this scheme. The summer equinox was as if announced when the rays of the sun touched the feet of the God asleep on his serpent bed. During the summer solstice in 2001 it was observed that although the rays of the sun did not actually touch the feet of Viṣṇu, they were remarkably close (Photo 41). The possibility of their having touched the feet in the fifth century CE is high, as it has been noted above that the Tropic of Cancer has shifted due to the irregular rotation of the earth. The details of the observations as discussed below in Chapter VI. The panel depicting Anantaśāyana is of a large size and also shows Brahmā, Lakṣmī, Mārkaṇḍeya, Garuḍa, along with the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha (Photo 16). The two demons issued from Viṣṇu's ear as he lay asleep on the serpent Śeṣa at the end of the Kalpa and were killed just as they were about to destroy Brahmā, as he sat on the lotus that sprang from Viṣṇu's navel.

The association of the deity with the end of a Kalpa is significant in that another panel shows Viṣṇu in his Varāha *avatāra*. This form is associated with the beginning

of Varāha Kalpa, i.e. the present age.[28] The two panels are the only large reliefs on the site and are located at opposite ends of the passage (Photo 15 - 16).

The Tropic of Cancer passes near this place and this line is often mentioned in the *śāstras* as an ideal spot for celestial observations, the iconography seems to be conforming to and complementing astronomic practice.[29]

The panel showing the Varāha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu is the most magnificent carving on the site. It shows Viṣṇu in his Nara Varāha *avatāra* rescuing Bhūdevī (the earth) from the depth of the Rasātala where she was submerged. The panel depicts row upon row of gods and saints who have come to witness the cosmic event and take refuge in Viṣṇu. The earth is personified as a goddess who is shown hanging on the tusk of the God. The panel is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Apart from the association of Varāha panel and Anantaśāyana panels with the Kalpas there is another similarity between the two, namely the presence of a kneeling figure shown holding the edge of his *dhoti* in one panel and a lamp in the other. This kneeling figure is accompanied with another figure at the back standing in *anjalī mudrā* (Photo 43). The standing figure wears a circular seal-like pendant around his neck and is obviously an assistant to the kneeling figure. As to the identity of the kneeling figure, Harle suggests it could be the king himself, a view also followed by Williams.[30]

The figure is royally robed and elaborate curls roll down his shoulders. The size of these images in both the panels is next only to the Viṣṇu and they occupy the

central space in the design. The man behind can be identified as Śāba Vīrasena who, as the inscription in Cave 7 describes him accompanying the king to the site. The seal around the figure's neck confirms his identity as a minister for such officers are closely linked to seals in Sanskrit literature.

Śāba Vīrasena, the son of Harisena, was an important actor on this site. The inscription in Cave 7 describes him as a man of logic, *nyāya*, *sandhī* and a poet from Pātaliputra. He was a minister of Candragupta II and he was personally involved with Udayagiri.[31] Therefore, Roy's argument that the Iron Pillar inscription at Mehrauli was written by Vīrasena, required closer scrutiny.[32]

This investigation brought out certain aspects of the Iron Pillar, the most important being its association with the Udayagiri cave-temples (Photo 24). The Iron Pillar as already noted carries a posthumous inscription of Candragupta II. Although it is dated only on paleographic grounds, the identification of Candra in the epigraph as Chandragupta places it in the fifth century CE. The caves at Udayagiri are dated 401/2 CE on the basis of an epigraph at Cave 6 that mentions the consecration of the cave by a Sanakānika king who 'meditates on the feet of Candragupta'. The inscription in Cave 20 was written in 426 CE during the reign of Kumāragupta, son and heir to Candragupta II.[33] The two inscriptions show that the demise of Candragupta II took place while the work at Udayagiri was in progress. This site has a rare distinction of being the only one where the king is known to have been personally involved. It is also the only known site where the king is depicted in the carvings.

Therefore, Udayagiri presents a strong case of being the original location of the Iron Pillar with its eulogy of Candragupta II. The inscription mentions as place called Viṣṇupadagiri. The identity of this hill is a matter of speculation as the pillar is believed to have been brought from outside Mehrauli and is not in its original location. As detailed in Chapter V, my thesis is that Viṣṇupadagiri was the original name of Udayagiri and that the pillar was originally located there.

The pillar is closely associated with the cosmological myth about the splitting of the cosmic egg and propping the sky by god Indra with a peg or *kīla*. As the sacred monuments of India, particularly the temples, were conceived as a microcosm of the cosmos, these myths served as the principal inspiration in the creation of sacred art. The rock-cut shrines at Udayagiri present two metaphors for the temple: the sanctum as womb (*garbha*), in which the divinity can be established and made manifest, and the temple as mountain. The entire hill is visualized as a temple gradually rising to its *śikhara* on the north where the structural temple marks the *uttaravedī*. The temple tower rising straight from the Bes river terminates at this *uttaravedī* joined by the invisible cosmic pillar to the *garbhgṛha* of the Śiva temple below (Cave 19), the whole mass of the temple mountain visually looming high on the plains of the landscape.

The hill acts like the *śikhara* of Cave 19, and to do this, large parts of the hill were removed and shaped. It is a different issue that this imagery where mountain becomes the *śikhara*, could reach full expression only at Ellora where the temple was successfully hued out of the

mountain, *śikhara*, *garbhagṛha* and all. The example of Parvatī temple at Nachna is worth citing, where the plinth is carved in the fashion of a hill and contains peacocks, and deer along with mountain rocks for realistic effect. This shows that mountain and cave were intrinsic to the concept of a temple during Gupta period temple construction.

The imagery is not confined to sculpture, architecture and inscriptions but is extended to water. Examination of the tanks and water channels (no longer used) suggests that running water was deployed to amplify the impact of the sculptures and the setting. The sculptures, water and the manipulation of the landscape together created myths that were not just oral but visual (Map 63 & 64). The impact of this visual poetry influenced art and architecture that cut across time and space boundaries and were reflected in the development of centres as far as Ellorā where the hill is cut in the shape of a temple. At Mahābalipuram, the panel which shows the 'descent of Gaṅgā' uses water to enhance the sculpture and carry forward the intention of the sculpture. Thus, it seems to find its ultimate source at Udayagiri, the only fifth-century site in India where water is manipulated not just to enhance the sculptures but to enrich the sacred significance and legendary narrative. The study of this water manipulation would add new dimension to our understanding of the Gupta period at Udayagiri, however, this aspect of the site could not be fully explored as key features are only partly visible and need to be exposed by excavation.

Symbolically, water cosmology is reflected in adoption of motifs such as *pūrṇa-ghaṭa*, lotuses, vegetative motifs and simply as waves on the panels of Varāha and Anantaśāyana. The *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif with its association with abundance, fertility, *amṛita kalaśa* and water has its origins at Udayagiri and in a stylized form was worked into the vocabulary of temple architecture in general and pillars of the temple in particular (Photo 44). The river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā were carved to create a conceptual map of the Hindu world, their iconographic presence changing all the water at the site into the water of India's holiest rivers. The ordinary features of Udayagiri were thus purified and transformed into a truly sacred geography. Architecture gained a new vocabulary at Udayagiri and scientific knowledge expressed in religious beliefs was captured as rituals to be enacted daily or cyclically.

The present study has brought out certain dominant themes and schemes on the basis of which the construction at Udayagiri may have taken place. The site is highly vandalized with objects spread far and wide. An attempt at finding these objects forms part of the research and the reconstruction which forms the basis of the analysis, includes many of these missing objects as part of our effort to re-visualise and understand sacred landscape of Udayagiri.

[1] Fleet, *CII*, 3, pp. 26-31 and mumber 6, pp.43-5.
[2] Fleet, *CII*, 3, pp.1-21.
[3] Williams, *Gupta India*, p.22; Allen, *A Catalogue of The Indian Coins In The British Museum, Coins of Ancient India*, (London, 1936), pp. lxiv - lxvi.
[4] Williams, *Gupta India*, p. 22.
[5] The inscription in cave 7 shows the involvement of the king on this site.
[6] Fleet, *CII*,3,(pp. 14 [2]. Tat-parigṛihītena, is read by Fleet as meaning- Candragupta II was selected by Samudragupta from his many sons as his heir to the throne.
[7] Williams, *Gupta India*, p.25.
[8] Rāmagupta was known from Sanskrit play by Viśākhadatta called *Devī Candragupta*. According to this his younger brother, Candragupta, posed as queen, killed the Śakas and won both the queen and the throne.
[9] Dhruvdevī is mentioned as Candragupta's wife in the seal from Basarh while Kubernāga is mentioned in Prabhadevī Vākātakā's inscriptions.
[10] The example of Devi, is worth quoting here. Devi married the Mauryan emperor Aśoka when he halted here on his way to Ujjain as governor. Instead of moving to Pātaliputra with him she continued to have her residence at Vidiśā, and it is here that she built a monastery for her son Mahindra when he visited her from ŚriLaṇkā.
[11] Basarh: the supposed site of the ancient city of Vaiśālī is in the Muzzaffarpur district of Bengal (British India).
[12] R.K.Mookerji, *Candragupta II Vikramāditya (c.376-414 AD)*, in *Vikrama Volume;* (Gwalior: 1949), pp. 323-359.
[13] Ibid. pp.323-359.
[14] Ibid. pp.323-359.
[15] K.A.Subramania Iyer, Vikramāditya in the Sanskrit Tradition; Mookerji (ed.),*In Vikrama Volume.* (1949, pp. 153-176).
[16] D.C.Sircar, The Vikrama Samvat. Mookerji (ed.),*In Vikrama Volume.* (1949, pp. 557-586). The term 'Vikramāditya' is not used by any king prior to the Gupta period. Association of the title with the era of 58 BCE comes later; in earlier times, before the Guptas, the era was variously named. Cf. H. Roychaudhry, Vikramāditya in History and Legend, In; *Vikrama Volume*, (1949, pp. 488)
[17] K.A. Subramania Iyer, Vikramāditya in The Sanskrit Tradition, *Vikrama Volume,* (1949, pp. 167).
[18] John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology & Religion,* (Delhi: reprint 1983), p. 34.
[19] Ibid., p.34.
[20] Fleet, pp.43-45.
[21] Mookerji, pp., 340.
[22] Fleet, *CII*,3, pp. 170-173.
[23] Willis observers that this is strange as Udayagiri happens to be the biggest deposit of Gupta period remains.
[24] Willis, Inscriptions from Udaygiri.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Solomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, Oxford, p.265-267.

[28] Kalpa is a measure of time and according to Hindu tradition is equivalent to a day of Brahmā. His nights are of equal duration as day and extends over 4,320,000,000 ordinary years.

[29] P.V.Holay, Vedic Astronomers, *Bulletin of The Astronomical Society of India; No. 1, Vol. 26 (1998, March)*. According to him The identification of the summer solstice by Ashvinikumārs is proposed to be done by looking at the solar image in a well somewhere around the line of Tropic of Cancer in Central India. In Sūrya Siddhānta, the line passing through Avantī and Rohītaka was called rekhā the prime meridian.

[30] Harle, *Gupta Sculpture*, pp. 10-11; Williams, *Gupta India*, p. 45[75].

[31]The inscription mentions that Veraṣeṇa accompanied Candragupta II on his journey of world victory. He is also shown in the carvings.

[32]Roy, *Studies*, pp. 1-27.

[33]Fleet, *CII*, 3, pp. 324-327.

CHAPTER IV

UDYAGIRI DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD:

ICONOGRAPHY AND EPIGRAPHS

Iconography

There are three main divisions of time according to Purānic tradition: Yugas, Manvantaras and Kalpas. A Kalpa is a day of Brahmā that extends, by some accounts, to 4,320,000,000 ordinary years. At the close of the day of Brahmā, a collapse of the universe takes place, which lasts through a night of Brahmā, equal in duration to his day. During this period the worlds are covered with one great ocean. The lotus-born Brahmā, expanded by his consumption of the universe, and contemplated by the Yogis and gods in Janaloka, sleeps on the serpent Śeṣa. The present Kalpa, or day of Brahmā, is called Varāha Kalpa.[1] This mytho-poetic vision of time finds full expression in main relief panels at Udayagiri, those located at opposite ends of the passage.

The first, in Cave 5, shows Viṣṇu in his Varāha avatāra (Photo 15). Marking the beginning of the present Kalpa, the panel is located at the beginning of the passage and also faces east toward the rising sun (Maps 04). The second panel shows Viṣṇu, in cosmic sleep on the coils of Śeṣa nāga (Photo 16). Myths associate Anantaśāyana Viṣṇu with the end and long night of each Kalpa. This panel is located at the west end of the passage and faces north. Near Anantaśāyana

is Viṣṇu in his Narasiṁha *avatāra*, smaller in size than either Anantaśāyana or Varāha. Narasiṁha is the man-lion form that Viṣṇu takes to save his devotee Prahalād from his demonic father Hiraṇyakaśyapū who wants to kill him for worshipping Viṣṇu. In order to do so, according to the legend, the avatāra could be neither man nor animal and the time neither day nor night.[2] The Narasiṁha consequently stands in an intermediary position between Varāha and Anantaśāyana.

The Udayagiri reliefs thus take us on a journey through cosmic time. Set in a deep cut running from west to east, they can be read from the western end, the side of the setting sun, with the dissolution, night of the Brahma and Viṣṇu's sleep. This is followed by the twilight time of Narasiṁha and, finally, the heroic creation of a new Kalpa under Varāha who faces east toward the rising sun of a new day and epoch. This journey through time is located at the foot of the hill. All the carvings and the caves are cut into the south wall of this passage and also on the east face abutting it. At the western end of the passage there is a massive embankment for a water tank No.2 (Map 61, 63 & 64). This tank is now dry due to deforestation and, in all probability, micro changes in the climate. The ramp of this embankment may have also acted as part of an elephant path leading to the top of the northern hill. This elephant path is distinguishable at the northern end of the tank, where cobbled stones are laid across the valley (Photo 39).

To the east of the passage, a modern road separates the hill and Varāha panel from another tank No. 3 that is still filled with water. Study by the present author revealed traces of the watermarks around the base of the Varāha panel showing that the feet of

the god were once washed with water, creating a dramatic multi-media depiction to Varāha's cosmic act of rescuing Bhūdevī, the earth goddess, from the depths of the *sāgara* (sea). Old ASI photographs show the tank was larger than it is today (Photo 17). Judging the full size of the ancient tank is difficult but it seems its southern edges reached Cave 2. The reasoning behind the isolation of Cave 2 from the core area of activity appears to be the tank.

The imagery of the Varāha panel is in conformity with Matsyapurāṇa where Viṣṇu is evoked.[3] Explanation is provided in the textual source for the presence of row upon row of *ṛṣis* and celestial beings standing on either side of the mighty central figure of Varāha. He stands like a majestic colossus with his bent left foot resting on the coils of the thirteen-headed *nagā* Ananta in a great show of power and strength. The *nagās* are emblematic of the water and Varāha's submission of Ananta in this panel shows his complete command of the waters from which he has rescued the earth. Ananta and Śeṣa are interchangeable and with Vāsuki form the triad of chief serpents in the Hindu pantheon. Vāsuki is not featured in the passage reliefs, but appears as a rope used by the gods and demons to churn the milky sea in the doorway to Cave 19 (Photo 49).

The Varāha panel is remarkable in that it has no major precedent and the visual form seems to have been drawn not just on the myths of the god but also on the acts of the king Candragupta II. The 'signature' of the king comes in the form of his image on this panel. There is a figure behind the Nāgaraja who kneels with the folds of this garments held in his right hand; the head and left hand are missing. The figure is large like the Nāgaraja, big in comparison to the other

figures on the scene, and is outsized by only Viṣṇu in his Varāha avatāra (Photo 18). Only the elegant curls of his hair and the braided band across his left shoulder are distinguishable. The figure wears a *dhoti* that is very stylishly tied at his waist with another braided band. He wears a necklace and a solid round bracelet in his right hand. In his ears are circular *tāntuka kundala*. The figure is repeated in Anantaśāyana panel of Viṣṇu. There is also a man in attendance behind him. This attendant figure is repeated at both places too. The whole bearing is royal. The iconography of the Varāha does not call for these images and Harle thinks the figure Candragupta II Vikramāditya.[4] Almost a visual translation of Mehrauli Iron Pillar, which says "having in faith fixed his mind upon Viṣṇu", he is shown kneeling in front of the god in this panel.

Candragupta II is shown accompanied by his minister Śāba Vīrasena, who stands behind him wearing a seal-like pendant around his neck declaring his official status. In the Anantaśāyana panel the king holds some kind of a lamp to the god in his right hand. The fact that the king is depicted on the two large panels shows not just the importance of these images but also to the personal involvement of the monarch.

The Varāha visually divides the panel. To the right are the figures of the king and the *nagā*. Bhūdevī, in the form of a maiden, hangs from Varāha's tusk and takes support from his left shoulder. The left hand of Varāha rests on his left thigh while his right hand rests on his waist, the pleats of his garment (*dhoti*) spread across the splayed legs. A large garland (*vanamālā*) hangs from his neck and touches his knee. This thousand-lotus garland, the hallmark of Viṣṇu, is thick and seems to sway in the air.

The carving continues on the two side panels of the niche. There we find the two river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, the earliest examples in Indian art. They symbolize the Indic heartland of the Gangetic *Doab* or Madhyadeśa standing on their respective *vāhana* (vehicles) and are set in a backdrop of wavy lines symbolizing the water. The lines run vertically so as to depict the descent of Gaṅgā and Yamunā to the sea. Across the lower part of the panel the wavy lines run horizontally down to the base of the panel which, as already noted, had actual water at its foot. This watery world is alive with swaying lotuses, shells and sea creatures. Varuna, lord of waters in Vedic lore, is shown personified and holding a water pot. There were, in all probability, actual lotuses growing in the *sāgara*, so there would have been a subtle blending of relief sculpture and landscape features which is not evident today. Musicians and dancers accompany the goddesses on their journey to the great sea below. In the heavens are represented flying *gandharvas* while the watery *pātāla* seems to be alive with swaying lotuses, shells and other sea creatures.

The size of the colossal Varāha, is over emphasized by the small scale of the sages, Vāsus, Ādityas, Rudras, Nārada, Śiva, Brahmā and Tumburo. The images of the king and the *nagā* are second in size only to the god. The small accompanying figures are also in keeping with the proportions followed in the Varāha panel. The Varāha panel is comparable to the Anantaśāyana panel at the opposite end of the passage, in more ways than one. Carved in the same style, both are part of the overall scheme of the site that was religious in its conceptualization, political in its symbolism and astronomical in its application. The treatment of Viṣṇu is similar to that of Varāha, with

large and heavy *vanamālā*, lotus above and twisted drapery around his waist.

Agarwala, on the basis of Devīmāhātmya, identifies the figures of Garuḍa, Markaṇḍeya, *Āyudha puruṣas*, Tāmasī, and the two demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, that accompany the sleeping god.[5] The kneeling king is shown here along with his minister Vīrasena, who stands behind him at the lower half of the composition. The panel is aligned east-west with the feet of the god on the west.

This panel and the Narasiṁha panel nearby have the same formative importance as the Varāha panel. The four-armed Narasiṁha, representing cosmic dusk that is neither day nor night, is appropriately located near Anantaśāyana panel. The four-armed Narasiṁha, in the round, from Besnagar is in the same style as this with the four arms pointing downwards, two of them resting on *Āyudha puruṣas* and the other two resting on the waist.[6]

Beginning with the analysis of K.P.Jaiswal and V.S.Agarwala, the Varāha has been read as an allegorical representation of the king using Viśākhadatta's play Devīcandragupta.[7] Like Viṣṇu, who rescued the goddess earth from the depth of the ocean, so the king rescued Dhruvasvamini from the hands of the barbarians. The conquest of Ananta can also be read as a political allegory in that the Nagās were one of the dynasties conquered by Samudragupta.[8] A certain punning is also evident in that Samudragupta's name means 'He who is protected (gupta) by the ocean (samudra)'. The political allegory and double meaning can be extended to Candragupta, the patron of the Varāha relief, in that he married into the Nāga dynasty that was

overpowered by Samudragupta.[9] This allegorical use of religious imagery appears to begin at Udayagiri and is carried forward by a number of medieval Indian dynasties who repeatedly named deities after the ruling king thereby drawing a parallel between the monarch and the deity to which he was devoted.

Aside from the main Vaiṣṇava panels, Udayagiri appears to be the place where the pattern was set in iconography for the positioning of *dvarpālas*, Ganeśa, *mātṛkās* and Mahiṣāsuramardinī at or beside the entrances of the *garbha gṛhas* that housed Śiva *liṅga*. This was a feature that found acceptance by the later Hindu temple builders and developed into the full-fledged vocabulary of temple architecture. At Udayagiri, the Śiva *liṅga* is carved with a face (*mukha*), the god's *vyakta-avyakta* form, that is the one in which he is both manifest and non-manifest. To do justice to the creative energy that has gone behind conceptualization of each of these gods, they are taken up individually in the following paragraphs.

Mukhaliṅgas

The symbolism of *liṅga* is a subject that has been discussed at length in both popular and scholarly writing. According to Brahmanical literature, *liṅga* is the subtle, recognizable, unchangeable sign of the otherwise unknowable, transcendental, unseen Śiva, and this sign may be in the form of a phallus to symbolize Śiva's capacity to produce life itself.[10] Śiva's presence at Udayagiri is in this symbolic form. The origins of the religious significance of this symbolic form is difficult to trace, and according to some, the roots of this symbol are in the Indus valley. In literature the term *liṅga* rarely occurs prior to the

Upaniṣads. Mahā-Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad contains a series of prayers to *liṅga* with the salutation 'Homage to the Lord of destruction, homage to him who puts an end to destruction'.[11] The *liṅga* is thus the first 'sign' of the essence of Śiva, in subtle form or matter.

The earliest variety of *mukhaliṅga* (*liṅga* with a face) is that of Paraśurāmeśvara Śiva in Guḍimallam, Andhra Pradesh, generally thought to date to second century BCE. But, it is in the Kuśāna period that the iconography took shape to develop fully in Gupta period like so many other forms. *Mukhaliṅgas* in general represent a stage in the unfolding process of the celestial, which must come after the manifestation of his *liṅga* form, as the *mukha*(s) or aspect(s) issue from his subtle form. In Malwā the abundance of *mukhaliṅga* can be traced to Gupta period. Udayagiri may have started the trend in crafting *ekamukhaliṅgas* in stone during Candragupta II's time. There are, however, *liṅgas* of Kuśāna period to be found in Besnagar, the major trading town nearby.

The *liṅga* generally consists of three sections, a square base that becomes octagonal and finally ends on the top with a projecting circular nut. This circular nut with a realistic cut on its front side is called the *pūjā bhāga* of the *liṅga*. Two thirds of this type of *liṅga* is embedded in the *pītha* or altar. Symbolically it denotes the union of Śiva with Umā as the two generative principles of the universal procreative process.

Among the *liṅgas* that are now present at Udayagiri is a *mukhaliṅga* in Cave 4 (Photo 45), (Map 11, 12). The round face, thick lips and high arched eyebrows provide a perfectly balanced composition. The hair frames the

face and is tied tight in a topknot first before falling on the sides in seven strands. Clear sharp lines define the flow of the hair. The third eye incised on the forehead is vertical like a fish. The eyes are half closed and the lips end in a smile. The *kuṇḍalas* in the ears hang down to the necklace, which is like the foliate design of Cave 6. A line that runs around the back defines the *pūjā bhāga*. The cylinder of the *liṅga* forms the shoulders.

The small topknot is like a fountain of water that gets divided into seven downward flowing streams. The myth of Śiva holding Gaṅgā in his hair, which has been brought down from the heaven by the prayers of the sage Bhagīratha, is best quoted from Dowson:[12]

'Gaṅgā: The sacred river Ganges. It is said to be mentioned only twice in the *Ṛgveda*. The Purānas represent the Viyad Gaṅgā, or heavenly Ganges, to flow from the toe of Viṣṇu, and to have been brought down from heaven, by the prayers of the saint Bhagīratha, to purify the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of King Sāgara, who had been burnt by the angry glance of the sage Kapila. Gaṅgā was angry at being brought down from heaven, and Śiva, to save the earth from the shock of her fall, caught the river on his brow, and checked its course with his matted locks. From this action he is called Gaṅgā-dhara, the upholder of Ganges. The river descended from Śiva's brow, in several streams, four according to some, and ten according to others, but the number generally accepted is seven, being the Sapta-sindhava, the seven *sindhus* or rivers. The Ganges proper is one of them.'

Śiva is conceived as Gaṅgā-dhara, which adds meaning to the presence of Gaṅgā on the door jambs and

Varāha panel. Study undertaken for the present project shows that there was more than one *mukhaliṅga* at Udayagiri. Fragments of *mukhaliṅgas* were discovered during the course of explorations on and around Udayagiri and Besnagar. A complete *mukhaliṅga*, probably from Udayagiri, is currently under worship at Rāmghāt located on the southern bank of Betwā (Photo 46).

Other than *mukhaliṅga* in Cave 4 and 19 there are *pīṭhas* in Cave 6 (Maps 14, 15 &18), Cave 16 (Maps 31, 32, 33) and Cave 17 (Maps-34, 35 and 36). Cave 15 (Maps 29 & 30) does not have either an image or a *pīṭha*. It is not clear what image would have been worshiped in Cave 8 as a large part of it has fallen (the doorjamb of one side is still visible). The square notch in front would have come in the centre of the cell and the possibility of there being a *liṅga* without a *pīṭha* cannot be ruled out. If there were *liṅgas* in caves 15 and 8, then Śiva caves total seven, which could have potential significance in astronomical terms. The origin of *liṅga* worship is connected with a myth involving the Seven Sages (Ursa Major). Asko Parpola elaborates on this connection between the Seven Sages and phallic worship by negotiating through texts such as the *Ṛgveda*, Satapatha-Brahmana and Avesta, finds from Kalibangan and also etymological analysis of the word *liṅga* with the Proto-Dravidian word *ning*, meaning to 'rise, become erect, stand upright and be extended'.[13] Looking at the astronomical significance of Udayagiri this connection does not appear implausible.

The *liṅga* in Cave 6, unlike those just mentioned, is a later substitution. The original could have been vandalized along with the temple on the top of the northern hill. In Cave 19, the *pīṭha* has two *liṅgas*, one of them is a *mukhaliṅga* and seems to be from the

site itself. This *mukhaliṅga* is smaller and more slender than the one in Cave 4.

An old ASI photograph shows a *Sahastraliṅga*, i.e. liṅga with many liṅgas attached, in front of Cave 19 (Photo 20). This liṅga is currently at Sānchī. Another ASI photograph taken after the excavation in 1914 by Bhandārkar on top of the northern hill shows a *mukhaliṅga* (Photo 21). The context is not otherwise recorded. This *mukhaliṅga* is very similar in style to the one in Cave 4. It shows Śiva with a topknot and strands of hair flowing down. It is a slender *liṅga* and evidently comes from a subsidiary shrine.

To summarize the details of *mukhaliṅgas* at Udayagiri it seems there were at least three Śiva subsidiary shrines on the top of the hill and seven caves at the bottom of the hill. All the Śiva caves face east, and all the *mukhaliṅgas* have a *jatā* (topknot) hairstyle with strands of hair flowing down the sides. In the ears of the god is *Tāntuka Cakra*, the kind that is seen on the ears of Saptamātṛkās from Besnagar.

Mātṛkās

The cult of the Saptamātṛkās is one of the most ancient in India. The seven mothers were believed to be the feminine counterparts of the seven great Brahmanical gods. Their origin is explained in Purānic myth thus: Śiva in a great battle with the chief of the *asuras* Andhkā found that from every drop of blood falling to earth from slain *asuras* another *asura* sprang. Fearing to be overcome by them, he created out of the flame that issued from his mouth in battle a *Śakti*, Yogeśvarī by name. The seven Brahmanical gods

did likewise, and the seven *Śaktis* thus brought into existence, led by Yogeśvarī, caught each drop of blood as it fell and thus was the chief of the *asura* overcome.[14] Despite the common occurrence of seven *mātṛkās* in the later sculptural traditions of north India, at Udayagiri the mothers are in a group of eight and six (Maps 13 & 19). The *Aṣṭamātṛkās* or the *Aṣṭasiddhis*, believed to preside over success and achievement, were looked upon as the *Śaktis* of Ganeśa. They are probably the same as *Saptamātṛkās* with Yogeśvarī added.[15] The *Aṣṭamātṛkās* or *Aṣṭasiddhis*, that occurs only at the lower *mātṛkās* niche in front of Cave 6, shows Kārttikeya on his peacock *vāhana*. The design of the feathers of this peacock covered the background of this image.

The images are severely damaged and most of the heads have disappeared. Detailed examination of the images, for this project, revealed traces of *āyudhas* and *pitākas* of these damaged *mātṛkās*. The two groups of six (besides Cave 4 and Cave 6) have Vīrabhadra to their right and another figure to their left. The mothers have children, some of whom stand on the floor with their heads on the lap of their mother. There must have been a ritual of anointing the *mātṛkās* with water (or some fluid) which was drained out through the grooves and channels cut into the rock. It could be due to this ritual that the images have become so worn and damaged. The ritual of anointing them with water reminds one of the *gaja-lakṣmī* seated on the lotus being anointed by two elephants shown at Sānchī and on contemporary coinage. Evidently worship by fluids was a well-established ritual practice long before the images at Udayagiri were made. The rectangular caves with mother goddesses in their present condition give the appearance of large open niches. However, close study

of the sides and floors of the niche shows there were stone panels or railings across the mouths of the caves. The entrance was relatively narrow and the access to the images thus restricted.

These groups of *mātṛkās* at Udayagiri were part of a larger cult in the area. Lake discovered *Sapta-matrkās* from Besnagar in 1910 half a km from the Heliodorus pillar.[16] All of them are carved in the round; three hold a child. The figures wear a simple lower garment with a girdle running round the waist. There is nothing in these figures that can associate them as the *śaktīs* of the great gods. Each of them is two armed and is seated on simple four legged stools in *bhadrāsana*.[17] The most interesting part of their iconography is their headgear (Photo 34). Each is different, but a number of details show their association to sculpture at Udayagiri. One of the mothers is shown with a vertical third eye and sports a hairstyle like the goddesses carved on the *nakṣatṛa cakra* (asterism wheel) from the northern hilltop at Udyagiri. In their ears they wear *tāntuka cakra*. The hairdo and necklace of another *mātṛikā* is similar to the Mahiṣāsuramardinī in front of Cave 6. The eyes of this *mātṛkā* are half opened like Śiva of the *mukhaliṅga* in Cave 4. These and other parallels, notably the shape and proportion of the face, would suggest they were from Udayagiri had they not been found together at a considerable distance.

The *mātṛkās* were found 'about half a mile to the north of Khamba Bābā with their heads buried in the ground in a higgledy piggledy order, as if they had been thrown down'.[18] As a counter argument to this one can cite examples of images that were moved around from Udayagiri hill such as *mukhaliṅga* at Rāmghāt. One can

speculate that sensing the impending danger of invaders the people of the region salvaged the images. It is very difficult to explain why people who destroyed Bījā Maṇḍala totally should have spared huge images of Yakṣa,[19] Yakṣī,[20] and *mātṛkās*.[21]

Exploration brought me to a two-armed Gaṇeśa currently in a temple on Besnagar mound that appears to be part of the *mātṛkās* from Besnagar. The image is big and the god is seated on a stool, like the *mātṛkās*. There is a thick layer of *gērū* (yellow paste used in prayers) covering the image, which prevents one from seeing the features. What, however, is clear is the bulk and the volume of the carving which follows the proportion of the *mātṛkās*. Patil suggests that *mātṛkās* from Besnagar were *Kṛtikas*, one of the 27 constellations, who nursed Kārttikeya and were the wives of the *saptarṣis* (i.e. the seven sages) of astronomy.[22] He says this on the basis of the Vāyupurāṇa where the *mātṛkās* are shown to be the wives of the seven sages, the *saptamahārsis* (seven sages). Looking at their similarity with the goddesses shown in the *nakṣatra cakra*, the possibility of these *mātṛkās* belonging to the same period is high. Patil suggested a fourth century CE date for these images.[23]

Gaṇeśa

Alice Getty suggests that it was possibly because of his early popularity as 'Remover of Obstacles' that Gaṇeśa was attached to different groups of deities such as the *Navagrahas* (the Nine Planets) and the *Saptamātṛkās*. In the *Iśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*, Gaṇeśa, under the name of Vighnanāyaka, is invoked to protect little children from the demon-goddess by removing all obstacles to a successful propitiation of the

Saptamātṛkās. In the Mahābhārata they are referred as the mothers of Skanda (Kārttikeya), but Skanda is never figured accompaying them like his brother Gaṇeśa.

At Udayagiri, beside Cave 6 Gaṇeśa is carved opposite the *mātṛkā* cave and faces towards them. Two armed and ithyphallic, this Gaṇeśa already has an established relationship with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. This Gaṇeśa appears on the proper right of the goddess in her act of killing the Buffalo demon. The image is shown with *modaka* (sweetmeat) in his left hand and his coiled tusk reaching to take one. He is shown seated in *lalitāsana* (folded legs) with right leg folded and right leg hanging from the stool. He is potbellied and wears a simple jeweled band encircling his forehead. Gaṇeśa is shown with a third eye, which says Getty, is shown when he is invoked in *Tantric dhyānas*.[24] He is depicted seven times at Udayagiri at the places described later.

Although most of the major depictions of this god show him two armed and ithyphallic, in Cave 18 he is depicted with four arms and is accompanied by a worshipper who carries a banana plant. In another carving near Cave 19 on the face of the cliff, Kārttikeya is shown along with Śiva, Pārvatī and Gaṇeśa as a family group. The third is a pictoglyph of Gaṇeśa with an axe in his right hand and with his head turned towards his left shoulder (Photo 11). This is engraved on the floor of the Jain Cave 20. The cutting of a depression in the cave floor subsequently damaged this pictoglyph, indicating the pictoglyph is of considerable age perhaps tenth or eleventh century.

Mahiṣāsuramardinī

The earliest images of Durgā (Mahiṣāsuramardinī) as the killer of the Buffalo demon (Mahiṣāsura) date from early Kuṣāna times, about the beginning of the current era. The most important account of the myth is that in the Devīmāhātmya, chapters 79-80 of the Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa. The worship of Durgā in historic times, especially during the *navarātri* festivals around the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, culminating in the orgiastic celebration on the tenth day of victory, is worth noticing in reference to the astronomical significance of Udayagiri. Among her many names is Vindhyavāsinī, and the combined cults of Śiva and Caṇḍī were particularly developed in the Vindhya Hills. According to E. Pragiter the place of origin of the Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa, dedicated to those Śaiva rites, much influenced by Śaktism, may lay somewhere between the Narmada and the Tapti rivers.[25] The location of Udayagiri in reference to the above information becomes important, and we find that iconographically, around fifth century it was one of the few sites where there was high activity.

At Udayagiri, Mahiṣāsuramardinī is carved at four places in Cave 6 and Cave 17 (Maps-18, 31 to 33). Only the image in front of Cave 6 can be said to have survived in a near-complete condition, although even here the hands are damaged. She is shown pressing the head of the buffalo with her right foot, while she pierces him with various weapons that she holds, circle like, in her twelve arms.

The objects that the goddess at Udayagiri Cave 6 holds, on the left, are trident, bell, arrow, *vajra*, sword and garland.[26] On the right starting from the top,

she holds a garland, shield, quiver, bow, the buffalo's feet and an unidentified object. The *kuṇḍalas* (ear rings) in her ears resemble the ones worn by the *mātṛkās* from Besnagar. On the other hand the design on her armlets resembles the quadrafoil on the *kirīṭa mukuṭa* (cylindrical crown) of Viṣṇu nearby. She appears to have been crafted by the same hands that made the Viṣṇu and *dvārapālas*. The image is part of the larger scheme and could not have come later than the rest as suggested by O.Viennot.[27] The *mātṛkās*, said by the devī herself to be the emanations of her own power, are located in the adjacent niche. A very damaged Kumāra image is set in-between the Devī and the *mātṛkā* cave that comes perpendicular to it in front of Cave 6.

There were a number of conventions for representing the goddess at Udayagiri either indicative of several schools of artists or the formative character of the iconography when the sculptures were made or, perhaps, both factors working simultaneously. The other images of Durgā at Udayagiri are also twelve-armed and show the goddess blocking the advance of the buffalo from the right with her left foot. These are located towards the east of the Cave 6 and in front of Cave 17. The demon is held down with her right hand and his face twisted upwards by her left hand. One of her right hands holds the buffalo demon by the tail.[28] The two images are carved on the outer edge of the rock face with the goddess blocking the demons escape towards east and north. She holds the buffalo's tail, arrow, *triśūla*, garland and an unidentified object. The last right arm presses the back of the buffalo. Her left arms hold the garland, shield, quiver, bow, buffalo's front left leg, and his face in clockwise direction. It appears as if her raised left leg rests on a rock that looks like a lion. There is a small

image near this lion that could be a man. It is very likely that these images are arranged in some sort of protective pattern and have directional significance. However, this is difficult to recover given that so much is damaged or missing from the site.

Standing (*Sthānka*) images of Viṣṇu

Although the count is uncertain due to damage, there are about nine comparatively small images of four-armed Viṣṇu standing straight, static and in a frontal pose with weight equally on both feet (*sampadā*).[29] Seven of these images are clear; two images are defaced. The two images in front of Cave 6 are located near the *mātṛkā* caves and are quite damaged. The two front arms rest on the head of personified weapons, *Gadā devī* and *Cakra puruṣa*. His two other hands rest on his waist or rather on the bouffant sash, which is characteristic of images at Udayagiri. Five Viṣṇu images are located in the passage in Caves 9, 10, 11 and two near Narasiṁha in Cave 12. The ninth Viṣṇu could be in the niche between the Varāha panel and Cave 6. The position of the *Āyudha puruśa* is the reverse of Viṣṇu in Cave 11 (Maps 24 & 25).

The Viṣṇu to the proper left of Cave 6 is shown with *śrivatsa* on his chest. The design of this *śrivatsa* is unique to Udayagiri Viṣṇu and is not repeated anywhere except for the Viṣṇu image from Heliodorus Pillar. The four leafed design on the *kirīṭa mukuṭa* on this Viṣṇu in Cave 6 is repeated in few places such as the armlet of Mahiṣāsuramardinī nearby and on the abacus of a column at Gwalior Museum (Photos 40). He is shown wearing a long *vanamālā* that goes around his arms and falls below his knees (Map 18).

Kumāra

In ancient myth, the *Kṛtikas* (Pleiades) were the mothers of Skanda, whose metronym therefore is Kārttikeya (Map 18 & 19). The myth begins with Śiva's seed that Agnī found too hot to carry and was thus dropped into the Gaṅgā who in turn put it in the arms of the *Saptamātṛkās* who nurtured it into a newborn child. Skanda is associated with youth and Kumāra, literally 'prince', is one of his principal names. He is a war god also known as Mahāsena and worshipped in the South as Murugan. Curiously enough this great general of heaven is often connected with infants and infant diseases.[30] In iconography he is shown as a youth with three strands of hair and holding a spear in his right hand. He is called *triśikhin* i.e. he with his hair divided into three strands, as in Udayagiri. Harle considers this image in Cave 3 as one of the most beautiful.[31] This is an important image specially as Kārttikeya was not widely worshipped in north India in the post Gupta period. He evidently had a wide cult in the Kuṣāna period (shown especially by coins) but by the Pratīhāra period he most typically appears as a secondary deity in the central western niche of Śiva temples.

Kumāra is also carved to the left of the Aṣṭamātṛkās near Cave 6. He is shown seated on his *vāhana* peacock, the design of its opened feathers spread in the background. The seated mothers each hold a flag. A very damaged figure on the right could be that of Vīrabhadra. This may be the oldest instance where he sits on a peacock. In earlier representations on seals the bird is small and he often holds it under his arm. In other *mātṛkā* caves near Cave 4 the Vīrabhadra form of Śiva can be seen more clearly. The

number of Kumāra carved at Udayagiri hills is seven including the medallion where he is shown with his family: Śiva, Pārvatī and Gaṇeśa with their vehicles.

Gaṅgā

The visual depiction of Gaṅgā and Yamunā on their *vāhanas* at Udayagiri is the earliest in India and has a formative importance. The subject is discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII.

Dvārapālas

Amongst the iconographic forms introduced at Udayagiri are the carvings of *dvārapālas*. Doorways of five caves are guarded by such figures. Of high artistic merit are the ones crafted on the doorway of Cave 6 (Photo 47). They stand in *tribhanga*, holding a staff ending in a trident but with an axe-head below. The *dhoti* is tied with a belt and has a large fan shaped sash on the side. The *dhoti* is of a diaphanous material and a thin line of underpants is visible. These able-bodied guards stand with their weight on the leg that is towards the door. The legs, which are on the outside, are slightly bent. The hair is styled in the three divisions, flat in the centre and held with a net like material at the two sides. They are big in size and pleasant in their expression.

Heads excavated from the northern hill top

The author found photographs of sixteen heads that were excavated from the northern hill in the ASI photo-archive in the course of the present research (Photo-23). They are so far unpublished. Among the heads are two *mukhaliṅgas* and two of Viṣṇu. Rests of the images are difficult to identify due to lack of context.

Epigraphs

Inscriptions were the most direct assertion of the royalty and the elite in the sacred space of Udayagiri. The locations of the inscriptions can also be interpreted as part of the pattern of control and power. The location of inscriptions, a subject that has received little or no study, can be taken as part of way in which the Gupta's 'inscribed' their identity on the site and expressed their power over it. Before we analyze the relationship of the various inscriptions and the hierarchy of their authors to the location of the inscriptions, we need to orient ourselves with regard to their respective locations. We start with the epigraph by the local king that is inscribed to the north of the entrance of Cave 6, called the 'Sanakānika inscription' because of its patron.

Sanakānika inscription at Cave 6

This is a short epigraph inscribed on a specially prepared surface on the face of Cave 6.[32] The inscription is of two lines.

TEXT

Siddam|| Saṁvatsaré 80 2 Âṣâḍha-mâsa-śukl-ê(ai)kâdaśyâm|

Paramabhaṭṭâraka-mahàrâjâdhi-śri-Chandr[g]upta-pâd-ânuddhyâtasya |

mahârâja-Chhagalaga-pautrasya mahârâja-Vishṇudâsa-putrasya Sanakânikasya mahâr[âja]-...ḍha(?)lasy=âyṁ dêya-dharmmaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Perfection has been attained! In the year 80 (and) 2, on the eleventh lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month *Âṣâḍha*, - this (is) the appropriate religious gift of the Sanakānika, the mahârâja ... ḍhala (?),- the son's son of the mahârâja Chhagalaga; (and) the son of the mahârâja Viṣṇudâsa,- who meditates on the feet of the Paramabhaṭṭâraka and mahàrâjâdhiraja, the glorious Chandragupta (II).

INTERPRETATION

Apart from the obvious, the inscription expresses 'meditating on the feet of Candragupta' as one of the sentiments. This is in keeping with the general expression of the iconography where the king is shown kneeling at the feet of Viṣṇu at two places. The expression occurs again in the eleventh century inscription in Cave 19 where the donor Kanha 'bows forever to the feet of Viṣṇu'.[33] The inscription reiterates the association of the temple to Candragupta.

Just below the epigraph, within the frame smoothened for the record, is another inscription in shell characters. This has been effaced. Although undeciphered, there is every possibility that this is a signature of the Sanakānika king who made the inscription. Sanakānika appears to be a local ruler who owed his allegiance to Candragupta II. There is a possibility that the hill of Udayagiri fell in his domain. The Sanakānikas were probably put in place by Guptas to displace the Nagās who were dominant in the area prior to Samudragupta.

Just as there are new iconographic conventions at Udayagiri so there are new epigraphic conventions developed in the Gupta period and carried forward in later centuries. Most importantly there is a hierarchy of kings, the 'little king' 'meditating on the feet' of his Lord. This shows the development of the institution of Indian kingship, which had of course existed before but which was not geared, as it is at Udayagiri, towards the creation of cave-shrines embellished with religious imagery.

Above the lintel at the entrance of the cave where this inscription is engraved, is a small icon of a seated male with big head gear. If we accept that the Varāha panel has Candragupta II and Vīrasena then there is every reason to believe that this small icon could be that of Sanakānika. The image is small as compared to that of Vīrasena, which works well in terms of the royal and social hierarchy.

To the left of this inscription tablet is an inscription in Telugu language. No one has attempted to translate the inscription; it has yet to be published.

The Cave 6 inscription shows that the epigraphs cannot be read in isolation and have to be viewed in relation to images and, we would argue, other epigraphs that are inscribed on the site. Therefore, familiarization with the content of the other inscriptions goes hand in hand with their relative positions and special meanings.

Vīrasena inscription in Cave 7

As mentioned earlier, Cave 7 lies to the east of the rest of the caves at the entrance to the passage (Map 04 &05). The importance of the cave is not

immediately obvious in that the ground levels have been modified by the misguided restoration work, the building of a wall and the construction of a road. Discounting these changes and looking at the content of the cave's inscription allows us to recover the ancient importance of the location.

The cave acts as the reception to the complex. The epigraph inscribed on the front wall of the cave is written in Gupta Brāhmi characters in five-lines.[34] The Sanskrit language epigraph is in poetic form with the verses numbered at the end. This again is a feature that appears in Gupta epigraphs for the first time. Candragupta II is mentioned in line one. It is written by his minister Vīrasena (family name), called Śāba who describes himself as a poet who knows the meanings of words, understands logic, and is familiar with the ways of mankind. He also records that he belongs to Pātaliputra and has accompanied the king in his 'conquest of the whole earth'. The concept of a 'universal conquest' although derived from Vedic practices, was reworked by the Guptas and became a standard feature of the authority claims of later monarchs.

TEXT

Siddham [||]Yad=[ṁ]tarjjyôtir-arkk-âbham=urvvyâm
[-- ----------]vyâpi Chandragupt-
âkhyam=adbhutam[||] 1

Vikram-âvakraya-krītâ dâsya-nyagbhûta-
pârtthiv[â] [---]mâna-saṁraktâ dharmma[------][||] 2

Tasya râjâdhirâj-arshêr=acinty-ô[---]rmmanaḥ
anvaya-prâpta-sâchivyô vyâ[pṛita-san]dh[i]-v[i]grahaḥ
[||] 3

Kautsaś=Śâba iti khyâtô Vīrasêñaḥ kul-âkhyayâ śabdârttha-nyâya-lôka-jñaḥ=kaviḥ=Pâṭaliputrakaḥ [||]4

Kritsna-pṛithvi-jay-artthêna râjñ=aiv=êha sah=âgataḥ bhaktyâ bhagavataś-Śambhôr=gguhâm=êtâm=akârayat [||]5

TRANSLATION

Perfection has been attained.....which shines like the sun, radiant with internal light,.....upon the earth ....., pervades ..... (and) has the appellation of Chandragupta (II.), (and is) wonderful;-

(Line 2)- Bought by the purchase-money of [whose] prowess, [the earth], in which (all other) princes are humiliated by the slavery (imposed on them by him), ... gratified by ..... religion.

(Line3)- He who holds the position, acquired by hereditary descent, of being a minister of that same saintly sovereign, possessed of inconceivable ..., (and) [has been appointed to] (the office of arranging) peace and war; (viz.)-

(Line 4)- He who, belonging to the Kautsa (gotra) is well known under the name of Śāba, (but is called) Vīrasêna by (his) family-appellation;- who knows the meanings of words, and logic, and (the ways of) mankind; - who is a poet; - and who belongs to (the city of) Pāṭaliputra,-

(Line 5)- He came here, accompanied by the king in person, who was seeking to conquer the whole world; and, through devotion towards the divine (god) Śambhu, he caused this cave to be made.

A significant point about the inscription is that it is located on one side of the rear wall of the Cave 7, i.e. it is off-centre in relation to the entrance. This is strange when you consider that it is the most important inscription on the site and contains a salutation to both king and Śambhu. The door that is guarded by *dvarapālas* is also elongated horizontally above their head to the right. The cave has a lotus on its ceiling that is centrally located and is perfectly round and symmetrical. There should, therefore, be some logical explanation for the positioning of the inscription.

This cave, carved into an unusual conical rock formation with a disc like top, is like a reception kiosk to the complex. The inscription in this cave is also introductory in character in that it introduces the key political players in the development of the complex in the early fifth century. If we look at the iconography of the Varāha panel, we find that the king has his minister Vīrasena standing in attendance just behind him. An analogous relationship can be argued between the Udayagiri epigraph and that of Vīrasena and king Candra on the Iron Pillar at Mehrauli. It is argued in Chapter V below that the Iron Pillar was located at Udayagiri. Here we propose that if one were to provide a place for the Iron Pillar it should replicate the relationship depicted in the Varāha panel, that is the Cave inscription of Vīrasena should have stood in a subordinate spatial relationship to the king's inscription on the pillar. The logical position for the Iron Pillar would thus have been outside Cave 7 and in front of the passage.

If the above is accepted, then in the hierarchy of inscriptions, one would first encounter the Iron Pillar Candra inscription, second the Vīrasena inscription and then the Sanakānika inscription. Although it is difficult to reconstruct ancient ritual movement around the site, a hierarchical positioning of inscriptions and monuments makes sense, in that we know that in nearby Buddhist sites (Satdhārā, Sānchī) *stūpas* and their inscriptions were located in respect to the seating arrangements of the disciples vis-a-vis the teacher. The shifting of the inscription of Vīrasena to one side was thus deliberate and can be read in relation to something important that was meant to take centre stage. The location of the Iron Pillar at the entrance of the complex can also be argued from Mauryan precedence. In the first case there is a formal similarity between the capital of the Iron Pillar and Mauryan lotus-form capitals at Sārnāth, Sānchī etc. More importantly Mauryan pillars were often erected in public spaces near the entrances to the most important Buddhist monuments. Although rooted deeply in Indian concepts of cosmogony and universal order, these columns also lend themselves to the legitimization of political power.[35] They acted as a threshold symbol demarcating the limits and centres of human order. Even the Iron Pillar acted as both the emblem of the deity and a symbol of the king, the Garuḍa that once surmounted the Iron Pillar being the royal attribute or totem of Gupta dynasty.[36] The inscription made explicit in words what was visually represented in the carvings on the site. We can thus examine both the inscription and the carved panels to see the relationship.

IRON PILAR INSCRIPTION

Yasy odvarttayataḥ pratīpamurasā śattrunsametyāgatān Vaṅgeshvāhava varttino sbhilikhitā khanḍgena kīrttir bhuje

Tīrtvā sapta mukhāni yena samare Sindhor jjitā Vāhlikā yasyādya pyadhivāsyate jalanidhir vvīryyānilair ddakshiṇaḥ||

Khinnasy eva visṛijya gām narapater ggāmāśritasyaetrām mūr(t)yā karmmajitāvanim gatavataḥ kīrt(t)yā sthitasya kshitau

ũāntasyeva mahāvane hutabhujo yasya pratāpo mahānnadhayā-pyutsṛijati praṇāśista-ripor yyatnasya śesaḥkshitim||

Prāptena ṣva bhuj ārjitañ ch suchirañ bhāvena Vishno (shṇau) matim prāṅśurviṣṇupade girau bhagavato Vishnuordhidhvajaḥ sthāpitaḥ||

TRANSLATION

He, on whose arm fame was inscribed by the sword, when in battle in the Vanga countries;

He kneaded (and turned) back with (his) breast the enemies who, uniting together, came against (him); -

He, by whom, having crossed in warfare the seven mouths of the (river) Sindhu, the Vāhlikas were conquered;

He, by the breezes of whose prowess the southern ocean is even still perfumed;

(Line 3)- He, the remnant of the great zeal of whose energy;

which utterly destroyed (his) enemies;

like (the remnant of the great glowing heat) of a burned out fire in a great forest, even now leaves not the earth;

though He, the king, as if wearied, has quitted this earth;

and has gone to the other world, moving in (bodily) form;

to the land (of paradise) won by (the merit of his) actions, (but) remaining on (this) earth by (the memory of his) fame;

(Line 5)- By him, the king,- who attained sole supreme sovereignty in the world;

acquired by his own arm and (enjoyed) for a very long time;

who, having the name of Candra, carried a beauty of countenance;

like (the beauty of) the full-moon, having in faith fixed his mind upon Viṣṇu;

this lofty standard of the divine Viṣṇu was set up on the hill (called) Viṣṇupada.

The last line describes the beauty of the king and his posture. It also gives the location of the Iron Pillar as 'Viṣṇupadagiri'. The beauty of the king as

set out in line 5 of the inscription is a poetic expression of the king in Varāha panel. The physical and cultural qualifications for kingship are captured in word in the Iron Pillar inscription and in superlative form in the image carved at the base of the Varāha panel. This strengthens the case for Udayagiri being the original location of the Iron Pillar. The real proof, however, rests on the identification of 'Viṣṇupadagiri'. Aside from the information and analysis given above the full case for Udayagiri is set out below in Chapter V.

Garuḍa, who appears in the Anantaśāyana panel in the form of a bird with human hands joined together in *anjali mudṛa*, is missing in the Varāha panel - an omission that would have been met by the Garuḍa on the Iron Pillar directly in front.

There were more inscriptions at Udayagiri that seem to have been destroyed over time. During the walks on the hills I came across a fragment on which few alphabets in Gupta Brāhmi were inscribed. The epigraph was written on two sides of the stone. A tentative reading of the inscription is given below :

SIDE A

...(rtarṣa)*(ta)...

(rā) mahātma(naḥ)pādamū[la]

śakulkīrttiparā * *

* sya (śrīś)(ca)...

(tri)bhuvanapa(t)[i]

SIDE B

(yo)bhagavato(ma)*

(ṣa)bhā(ṅgāḍa)jā...

The fragment appeared to be part of a column but the destruction has been so total that no sense could be made out of the remaining words. The column was obviously destroyed by human action, which is also in conformity of the spread of debris on the site. The subject is discussed later in the Conclusion.

[1] W. J. Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology,* (Delhi, 1882, reprint, 1975), p. 356.

[2] Ibid., p.149.

[3] Williams, *Gupta India,* p.44; Debala Mitra, Varāha-Cave of Udayagiri, pp. 99-103.

[4] Harle, *Gupta Sculpture,* p. 11.

[5] Williams, *Gupta India,* p. 47.

[6] The image is in the state museum at Gwalior. Acc. No.35. It is the earliest image of Narasiṃha known in the round.

[7] Williams, *Gupta India,* p. 45.

[8] A list of the kings and tribes vanquished by Samudragupta is engraved on the pillar at Allahabad and is called the Allahabad praśastī.

[9] Inscriptional record of the Vakātakā queen Prabhāvati mentions her lineage as having born out of wedlock of a Nagā queen with Candragupta II.

[10] Doris M. Srinivasan, Significance and Scope of Pre-Kuṣāṇa Śaivite Iconography in *Discourses on Śiva,* (Bombay, 1984), pp. 32-46.

[11] Ibid., p. 40.

[12] Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary,* p.108.

[13] Asko Parpola, *Deciphering the Indus Script* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 218. For iconography of Śiva see Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Shiva,* (Philadelphia, 1981).

[14] *Īśānaśivagurūdevapaddhati* (1.52, 79.b) cited in J. N. Banerjee, *Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1956): Alice Getty, *Ganeśa, A Monograph on the Elephant-Faced God* (Oxford, 1936); O. P. Misra, *Iconography of the Saptamātṛkā* (Delhi, 1989).

[15] Getty, *Ganeśa,* p.12. She says she does not know of any Aṣṭamātṛkās slabs in India and notes one in Nepal where eight devis are represented.

[16] The images are currently in Gwalior Museum with one image at the National Museum of India at New Delhi. The images are large with the height of about 5ft each. The expressions of the mothers are soft and benign and are accompanied with a smile.

[17] D. R. Patil, Sapta Mātṛikās from Besnagar. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress Session Held at Cuttack,* 1949, pp.109-112; R.C. Agarwala, Mātṛikā Reliefs in Early Indian Art, *East and West,* 21 (1971).

[18] H. H. Lake, Art. XVII. Besnagar, *JBBRAS,* (1910), p.140.

[19] Now in Vidiśā Museum, is more that 4mts high was found immersed in the Betwā riverbed with the head down.

[20] Three yakśis have been found from Besnagar, all from the Betwā riverbed with the face down.

[21] Preliminary study conducted by Hardy, Adam in Dec. 2000 reveals the plan as that of a Bhumija temple and the remaining portion to be only half the sabha mandapa.

[22] Patil, Sapta- Mātṛikās, pp. 109-112).

[23] Patil, Monuments at Udayagiri, *Vikrama Volume* (Gwalior, 1949), p. 112.

[24] Willis, (personal correspondence), Tantrism is difficult to define but by some scholars is thought not to have appeared in a significant way before the seventh century. While this may be true of fully developed Tantric practice and ritual, features of Tantrism clearly appear at an earlier date. Ganeśa, because of his well-known characteristic of celibacy is an appropriate associate of the mother

goddesses and the mothers because each is generally associated with a male deity as a śakti, inherent to all Tantrism.

[25] F. E. Pargiter, *The Mārkandya Purāna,* (London,1904), pp. 473-523.

[26] The garland has been variously misinterpreted. Banerjea, referring to the Udaygiri relief thought it was godha or crocodile. Viennot cited Agarwala V.S. who had interpreted it as a bowl. She cites Vogel in another paper who identifies it as a serpent. Finally, Harle (1974)notes that it is a garland on the basis of this figure at Udayagiri.

[27] O. Viennot, `The Mahiṣāsuramardini from Siddhi-Ki-Guphā at Deogarh', in *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art,* 4 (1971-72). She says -: as a fact, not only her many arms: twelve are numbered, but and above all the vigorous style of the sculpture as well as the details of the hair arrangement indicate the beginning of the 7th century C.E. in *Mālwā.*

[28] Sandrine Gill, *Phantasmic Anatomy of the Statues of Mathura,* (Delhi, 2000).

[29] Banerjee, *Development of Hindu Iconography.*

[30] M. Mukhopadhyaya, 'Some Notes on Skanda-Kārttikeya', in *Indian Historical Quarterly,* 7 (1931).

[31] Harle, *Gupta Sculptures;* Gill, *Phantasmic Anatomy.*

[32] Fleet, *CII,* III, No.3

[33] Willis, 'Inscriptions from Udayagiri'.

[34] Fleet, *CII,* 3, p. 35.

[35] John Irwin, Origins of Form and Structure in Monumental Art in Kapila Vatsyayana (ed.), *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern* (Delhi, 1991) pp. 145-8.

[36] Radha Kumar Mookerji, 'Chandragupta II Vikramaditya', in *Vikram Volume, (*Gwalior, 1949).

Chapter V

UDAYAGIRI DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD:

IRON PILLAR, CANDRA AND VIṢṆUPADAGIRI

It has been debated since its 'discovery' that the Iron Pillar is not located in its original position but was brought from elsewhere (Photo-24). There are no Gupta period remains in the vicinity of the place where it is located today that can be associated with the Iron Pillar. Fleet, who interpreted the inscription on the Iron Pillar, was of the view that the pillar was in its original location.[1] This view was based on the discovery of iron wedges at the base of the pillar, which were of the same quality as the pillar and hence original. On the other hand, other pillars at Delhi, such as the Mauryan pillars at Delhi Ridge and Firoz Shah Kotla, which were brought from Ambālā and Meerut respectively, were carried from their original locations, wedges and all.[2] A key point is that there is only low land around the column and nothing that conforms to or meets the descriptive requirement of a hill or *giri*. There is general agreement amongst the historians that the column was brought from outside Delhi. This has led to considerable speculation as to its original location. Views have been expressed in favour of Himālayas and Punjab.[3] Mathurā was also one of the places in the map of possible locations.[4]

The question of Candra, the posthumous nature of the epigraph on the Iron Pillar, and the question of

Viṣṇupadagiri are the reasons that the Iron Pillar is under discussion in this study.

Candra and Candragupta II

On paleographic grounds the inscription is placed in Gupta period during the reign of either Samudragupta or Candragupta II of the Gupta dynasty.[5] The question of the identity of Candra had earlier historians exploring the possible candidate from among every early monarch, great or small, whose name contained the word 'Candra'. The views are now clearly divided into two, those who support Samudragupta as the king mentioned and the others who support Candragupta II.

The case for Samudragupta is argued by Goyal in his book entitled *A History of the Imperial Guptas*. His case rests mainly on the basis of Samudragupta's other name *Candraprakāśa*.[6] However, Goyal does agree that a few points mentioned with regard to King Candra in the inscription on the Iron Pillar fit both Samudragupta and Candragupta II. Opposed to Goyal are the majority of scholars who favour Candragupta II. This is a position supported by Joanna Williams on the grounds of style. She states the style of Iron Pillar, if put in Samudragupta's time, comes twenty-five years too early.[7] The other pillars of similar design make their appearance during Candragupta II's time at Udayagiri and Besnagar. Other scholars argue the point in a different manner but the key problem with assessments of style is that they involve subjective judgements that cannot be verified in a scientific manner.

In summarizing the views expressed we would favour Candragupta II but would observe that the inscription is perhaps deliberately vague. Out of deference to Samudragupta, the Candragupta II inscription may have been

written with a double meaning so that it could apply both monarchs. This is confirmed by the content (see above Chapter III) which repeatedly stresses continuity i.e. the continuing presence of the king despite his physical absence in human form on earth.

Posthumous Inscription and Vīrasena

The fifth century epigraph on the Iron Pillar (dhvaja stambha of Viṣṇu) praising Candra (Candragupta II) was composed by Vīrasena, who had also composed the inscription at Udayagiri.[8] Vīrasena had accompanied the king in his *kṛtsna-pṛthivī-jaya* (world victory), and in the inscription at Udayagiri calls himself a poet.[9] Scholars accept the posthumous nature of the inscription on the Iron Pillar today but it was a subject of academic discussions in the fifties. Among the scholars who joined the discussion was the Sanskritist Roy Udai Narain from Allahabad.[10] During his very elaborate argument in favor of the inscription being a posthumous one, he also argues that the writer of the inscription was Śāba. Śāba is identified with Vīrasena who was the author of the Udayagiri cave inscription of the time of Candragupta II. The gist of the argument is that the two inscriptions are written in accomplished Sanskrit verse. Further more, there is no mention of the lineage of the ruler in both records.

Vīrasena, according to the Udayagiri cave inscription was a poet from Pāṭaliputra. He was proficient in grammar and well skilled in the various branches of knowledge, such as political science and philosophy.[11] Vīrasena was Candragupta II's minister for war and peace and belonged to the lineage of Harīsena who was the composer of Allahabad praśastī. Harīsena had served as minister for external affairs (Sandhivigrahika Sāciva) of the Guptas under

Samudragupta and was also a poet of a high order. According to Roy Vīrasena uses the expression 'anvaya-prāpta-sācivya' for himself in the Udayagiri inscription and this would suggest that he had attained his position by virtue of heredity. Vīrasena according to Roy was a scholar poet and also a specialist of Sanskrit grammar and therefore a faulty composition revealing the case of *'dūrānvaya-doṣa'* (a grammatical error) was unthinkable from him.[12]

Roy based most of his arguments in favor of the inscription being posthumous on the basis of the word *'adyāpi'* which has been used by the poet Vīrasena twice in the epigraph. He concludes that the eulogy of the Mehrauli Iron Pillar is a general description of the *'kṛtsna-pṛthvī-jaya'* of Candragupta II Vikramāditya. It must have been composed, Roy concludes, by his *Sandhivigrahika Sāciva* Vīrasena just as the Allahabad Pillar inscription was composed by Harīseṇa, the *Sandhivigrahika Sāciva* and 'poet laureate' of Samudragupta. The only difference lies in the fact that whereas the Allahabad record was written and caused to be engraved during the reign of Samudragupta by his protege, the Mehrauli epigraph was drafted and inscribed after the death of Candragupta Vikramāditya by his leading courtier. It thus appears that this officer outlived Candragupta II. He must have continued to supervise the works at Udayagiri which ofcourse were started when the king was alive.

Kumāragupta, heir to Candragupta's throne and also his son, continued to take interest in Udayagiri as is evident from the inscription in Cave 20.[13] It seems logical under the circumstances for Vīrasena to dedicate the epigraph in honour of the ruler he served as an active participant in his conquests at the place he had visited with his king.

Legend of Anangapāla

The legend of Anangapāla which ties the Iron Pillar to Delhi basically attempts to get to the root of the word Delhi in *Dhillī* (loose) which rhymes with *Killī* (iron nail) which is the Iron Pillar. This wordplay roots the presence of Iron Pillar in Delhi. The legend is based on the attempt to unravel the *'Dhillī kathā'* mystery of the word Delhi. The episode called the *'Killī Dhillī kathā '* finds mention in the orally transmitted Rājasthāni epic, the *Pṛthvirāja Rāso*, which recounts events that took place in the thirteenth century but which dates to a later time in its present form. The legend talks about a Brahmin who prophesies to the Tomara King Anangapāla that so long as the *Killī* stood, so long would Anangapāla's dominion last. In an attempt to verify the prophesy the king pulled the pillar out of the ground and found the blood of serpent king Vāsuki whose head the *Killī* is supposed to have pierced. The king realised the mistake and wanted to re-fix the *Killī* but failed and the *Killī* remained *Dhillī* (loose), and so the story concludes, in the looseness and shakiness of the pillar lies the origin of the name of the city of Delhi.[14]

The British soldiers initially reported the oral tradition associating the column to Anangapāla. Carr Stephen recorded in 1876 that the account of the original location of the Pillar was not trustworthy and tradition, silent as to its maker, attributes its erection to Anangapāla and places it in the temple of Rai Pithora. He further noted the inscription by Anangapāla about the erection of the temple was brief and that the date 1109 *Samvat*, i.e. CE 1052, referred to the new location.[15] This was the first time the myth associating Anangapāla to the Iron Pillar is heard of in the nineteenth century.

The word *'Dhillīkā'* (with which the word *Killī* is rhymed) occurs for the first time in the inscription of 1170 from Bijoliā, District Udāipur, which mentions the capture of Delhi by the Couhāns. The Pālam Bāoli inscription of 1276, found in a *bāoli* (step-well) in Pālam village some 19kms southwest of Delhi, records the construction of the well by Uddhava, a householder of *Dhillī*. In its third line, it tells of the land of Hariyankā, which was first enjoyed by the Tomars, then by the Couhāns and still later by the Delhi sultans.[16] The two words *Killī* and *Dhillī* were not associated with each other at this time.

Dhillī, Anangapāla and Iron Pillar are not epigraphically linked until the late nineteenth century and this in inscriptions on the Iron Pillar itself. There are many epigraphs on the Pillar and among them there is one where reference is made to 'Aṁgapāla'. This inscription carries a date and begins with *Saṁvat Dhillī 1109 Aṁgapāla vādi,* and then continues to give many other dates and names. This confusing inscription records the visit of Chatra Singhji Couhān in *Saṁvat* 1883. He traces his lineage to Pṛthvīrāj who actually flourished in *Saṁvat* 1151 and states that the he was Pṛthvīrāj's twenty third descendant. Chatra Singh inscribed again in *Saṁvat* 1888 and not only corrected the facts about his lineage but also made some additions to it. In this second inscription he wrote about Rājā Tuvār who was there in *Saṁvat* 419 and belonged to a race named Aṁgapāla. In *Saṁvat* 648 there was Vāsudeva Couhān Raja Indra. In the twenty first generation from the latter was Pṛthvīrāj in *Saṁvat* 1151 and in the twenty eighth generation from him Rājā Chatra Singh in *Saṁvat* 1888.[17]

Several things can be concluded from the record. The first is that Chatra Singh is using the inscription to articulate or construct a relationship between himself,

Anangapāla and Pṛthvīrāj. This is being done to bolster his standing as a Couhān Rajpūt, the second authority of the claim being expressed visibly on the Iron Pillar, the most conspicuous antiquity from earlier times in the popular memory. Chatra Singh, however, appears a little confused about the generations in the lineage and the ages in which they existed.

The inscription is of little consequence as far as providing a link between Anangapāla and the Iron Pillar. By the time the inscriptions were written the legends were in place and, more importantly, James Tod's book on Rājasthān had been published. Tod had a keen interest in Rājasthāni history, particularly the Rājpūt lineages, and his close association with many of the Mahārājas fired an interest among them in princely lore. Chatra Singh's inscriptions thus represent the rising interest in 'clan histories' inspired by the British rather than a pure and genuine oral tradition. The whole edifice is too weak, too late and too tinged by colonial concerns for us to build an ancient history of the Iron Pillar on it.

Gupta period archaeological evidence is missing and for such a 'wonder' to come up in a place all by itself without any accompanying structures is hardly plausible. The pillar stands in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque that was constructed by the Turkish invader Amir Qutb-ud-din Aibak in 1192. He is recorded to have demolished twenty-seven Hindu and Jain temples and used their materials in the construction of the masjid.[18] Iltutmish, successor of Qutb-ud-din, expanded the mosque by adding one bay on both sides and also his own tomb. The reused pillars, domes and incidental images incorporated into the mosque belong to a number of periods. The oldest appear to date to the seventh or eighth century,

with the majority falling in Pratīhāra and post-Pratīhāra times.[19] No remains belong to the Gupta period.

The association of Anangapāla to the Iron Pillar can be traced to Firuz Shah Tughluq. Firuz Shah, who brought the Aśokan pillars from Meerut and Ambālā to Delhi, also assembled pundits to try and read the Aśokan inscriptions. This attempt, the oldest case of epigraphic study in recorded Indian history, ended in failure.[20] We may assume from this that Gupta period script, such as that on the Iron Pillar, could not be read in the Sultanate period. Given the lack of access to primary sources, it seems likely that discussion and speculation began and that the Tomar legends attached to the Pillar started to form in the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The weak claim of Delhi on the Iron Pillar has led to a number of wild suggestions, notably the Himalayas (K.D.Bajpai, on the basis of Vāhlikā as localities in Baluchistan) and Mathurā (V. Smith on no particular basis). The two claims are unsupported by either archaeological remains or by historical possibilities. Udayagiri hill on the other hand has stylistic, scientific, cultic and historical evidence in its favour. These factors are considered in the following pages.

Stylistic Roots

The slender Iron Pillar at Mehrauli is topped with an inverted lotus and *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* capital. If we examine this *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif carefully we can trace the development of this design to the pilaster at Udayagiri Cave 4 (known as Vīnā cave). The *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* at the cave is broadly fluted, its plain concave facets continuing the lines of the sixteen-sided shaft below. The sixteen-sided column with octagonal and then square section below was a design adopted

during the Gupta period at Udayagiri and Besnagar. This design was continued at Tigowa and Deogarh in the later Gupta period.

Design of the *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* pilaster is repeated again on the Udayagiri jamb from the remains of Gupta temple on the northern hilltop (Photo 56). The bulbous circular fluted *ghaṭa* is depicted with *grīvā* on top and below. The fragment is still on the site. A column currently in Gwalior Museum has a *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* on top that is similar to that on the Iron Pillar. The pillar also comes from Udayagiri (Photo 40).[21] A pilaster of the same design and also from Udayagiri is currently in Vidiśā museum.[22] These examples are so close in design to the Iron Pillar that a shared geographical provenance seems likely. The time period of the pillar in Gwalior Museum is the same as Cave 4 and the four-leaf design on the top is repeated on the *Kirīṭa-mukuṭa* of Viṣṇu in Cave 6 and again on the arms of the adjacent Mahiśāsuramardinī.

Joanna Williams has this to say about the origins of this *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif 'The *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* capital is one element whose origin I hesitate to ascribe to Mathurā. No example comparable to those of Udayagiri Cave I have been found there. It is at least plausible that this use of motif should originate in Malwā, where small copper coins of Candragupta II continued the motif from issues of the local Mālwa tribe.'[23]

The *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif with foliage appeared first at Cave 1; the design in later architecture becomes stylized and far removed from its vegetative origins.[24] As an integral architecture motif it occurs in rich and varied forms as an essential part, generally the capital or sub-capital, of monolithic or structural columns or as the support of a pilaster. The form is always associated with

vegetation and as an inexhaustible vessel it is the *amṛta kalaśa*, which came out of the churning of the ocean by the *devās* and *asuras*. Garuḍa carried the *kalaśa* away on the instigation of Viṣṇu for Indra.

Iron forging at Vidiśā

In addition to the design, the actual fabric of the Iron Pillar also points to an origin in Central India. The reports of Bhandārkar's excavation at Besnagar and Marshall's excavation at Sañchī, mention iron which was of 'pure steel' quality and prompted comparison with the 'rustless' Iron Pillar.[25]

In 1963, the National Metallurgical Laboratory at Jamshedpur conducted an International seminar on the Iron Pillar. The ancient Indian steel often referred to as wootz (derived from the Kannada word *ukku*), had unique properties like high impact hardness and high malleability. Buchanan describes the process thus: 'The furnace for producing wootz consisted of a pit with vertically cut round fire place below the ground level.[26] At a distance of 20cm a 1.5m high wall surrounded this pit. Two tuyeres were sunk into the ground to force air into the furnace from two bellows. The clay crucible into which wrought iron pieces were charged along with pieces of wood and fresh green leaves were sealed and placed in the furnace. As many as fifteen charged crucibles were placed in the furnace and set fire to with charcoal. Care was taken to see that all the crucibles were completely covered with charcoal. The bellows continuously worked for four hours to raise the temperature of the furnace to over 1000°C. On cooling each crucible produced a lump of steel which was used for producing chisels, knives, spears and swords'.

The iron ore was obtained by surface quarrying and was bedded intermittently with charcoal in a small charcoal fired furnace with a foot-driven hide bellow. The hot lumps of iron sponge thus obtained were hammer forged in order to squeeze out most of the slag. Judging from the weld-lines visible on the surface, the Iron Pillar seems to have been built up from great many lumps, weighing 20-30kg each, successfully forge-welded together under firing with a charcoal blast. The surface of the Pillar still retains marks of hammer blows.

Iron of suitable quality was extracted in the Vidiśā and Dhār regions of Mālwa, a point that was not missed on both Marshall and Fleet. While working at Sānchī, Marshall found iron wedges under the Gupta pillar at the northern gate. On analysis the composition of the metal was found to be similar to the Iron Pillar, a comparison which he published.[27] Fleet on the other hand is reminded of the Iron Pillar at Dhār while translating the inscription on Mehrauli Iron Pillar of Candra. The Dhār pillar is mentioned in Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri and some fragments of it were installed at Akbar's tomb near Agrā.

This is an important point for it shows iron pillars were found in Mālwa and probably made there before the Mughals. That the region was a source of pure and malleable iron in ancient times is shown by Jātaka, III, 338 which mentions the sharp swords from Dasāna which competed with the blades from Damascus, 'Dasānnakam tīkhīnadhāram āsim'.[28]

Close study of metals from various sites and excavations provides archaeological evidence for a Central Indian origin of the Iron Pillar. Bhandārkar found the iron wedges from the base of Heliodorus pillar to be as pure steel as Marshall's wedges from Gupta pillar at Sānchī and Iron Pillar at Mehrauli. He reports this in his excavation

report of Besnagar. A technical comparison is given in the table below:

Description	Iron Pillar as mentioned in Anantharaman.[32]	Iron Pillar as analysed by Sir Robert Hadfield in 1919 (Marshall)[31]	Wedge from col. 35 Gupta period from Saṇchī as analysed by Sir Robert Hadfield in 1919.(Marshall)[30]	Iron pieces found below Kham Baba by Bhandārkar in 1913-14 and analysed by Sir Robert Hadfield. (Bhandarkar)[29]
C	0.15	0.08	0.05	0.7
Si	0.05	0.046	0.09	0.04
S	0.005	0.006	0.009	0.008
P	0.25	0.114	0.303	0.02
Mn	0.05	nil	0.09	0.02
Cr				Trace
Ni	0.05			trace
Fe	Balance			99.5
Cu	0.03			

This analysis shows that the phosphorus quantity is unusually high and less varying than the carbon content. Phosphorus occurs partly as a solid solution (i.e., dissolved) in ferrite and partly as a slag inclusion of iron phosphate. According to Anantharaman, the strongly oxidised parts and the surface layers of the Iron Pillar, depleted of carbon, tend to be richer in phosphorus than the interior parts. In a sample containing 0.25% phosphorus, careful analysis showed that 0.18% was dissolved as elemental P in ferrite, whereas the remainder appeared as phosphate slag. It is generally agreed that this high phosphorus content in the Pillar iron checks its corrosion and makes its own distinct contribution to corrosion resistance. The view of the experts has been that in oxygen-consuming corrosion phenomena, as in water and humid atmospheres, phosphorus in ferrite exerts a beneficial influence through oxidation to phosphate which acts as an inhibitor by promoting the formation of a protective, impervious oxide film on the surface.

The sulphur content of the Delhi Iron Pillar is very low, according to all analysis, probably because charcoal was used in reducing the ore. Coupled with the fact that the manganese content of the Pillar is also very low, the very low percentage of sulphur means that there are few centres of iron rich manganese sulphide (MnS) to initiate pit corrosion by serving as effective local cathodes. In fact, the sulphur printing technique has rarely revealed the presence of microscopically visible inclusions of sulphides in the Pillar iron. Thus, the low sulphur and manganese contents are expected to make some contribution to the increase in corrosion resistance of the Pillar.

In brief, the Iron Pillar at Delhi has higher phosphorus content (about five times more than in modern

steel), lower manganese content (often nil, as compared to about 0.5% in the modern steel), lower sulphur content (almost one-tenth or even less than that of modern steel), and higher slag content and a greater heterogeneity of the same than in the modern steel.

The availability of ore from near Vidiśā with this quality was discussed with Mr. Chaturvedi (Director-in-charge) Geological Survey of India, Operation Madhya Pradesh, who commented as given below:[33]

'The early people appear to have used the locally available low grade iron ore which they could locate in various types of iron-rich rocks, i.e., laterite, ferruginous quartzites, branded iron formations, ferruginous shales etc. Most of these ore deposits were small and localised in nature as no major iron-ore deposit has been so far reported from the Vidiśā area today. However, if we look for a favourable geological set up and the presence of iron-rich rock-types in the adjoining area, then probably some of the locales in Jhābuā district emerge as possible sources. Some ultrabasic rocks with free magnetite crystals are found there in the Hatini river section that could have been handpicked and separated from the rest of the rock to obtain a high-grade iron ore. The only phosphorite deposits of Madhya Pradesh are also located near Meghnagar in northern part of Jhābuā district. In this area secondary iron enrichment along fractures/fault planes have been observed which could have been used as a source of low-grade iron-ore on a smaller scale. This ore is comparatively more rich in phosphorous. Minor occurrences of Banded Iron Formation are also reported from nearby areas of Jhābuā district.

There is every possibility that the earlier people who could make a non-corrosive iron by smelting magnetite crystals (or other type of iron ore) which already had a

higher percentage of phosphorus exploited some of these small occurrences of iron ore. Alternatively, they could have mixed a small percentage of phosphorus while smelting the ore that is available in Jhābuā. This could be a possible source of phosphorus rich ore, which could have been smelted from the iron-ore available in this part. Geographically this area is not very far from Mālwa, Vidiśā'.

Lahiri, writing on the archaeology of Indian trade routes, reports ferruginous mineralization from Jahmār, near Vidiśā, where large heaps of slag have been found.[34] She also writes about the impressive evidence for iron working from Putli Karār group (Bhopal area) that included ores, slag, crucibles along with artifacts.[35] Slag was also discovered by Julia Shaw at around 8 sites within a 16km radius of Vidiśā. [36] There can be little doubt that more iron-working sites will be found through intensive field surveys. The main point to note is that iron was being smelted and worked in Mālwa from at least third century BCE. The historical sources demonstrate that until the famines of 1900, Vidiśā (like Gwalior) was a well-known iron producing area, and although most of it was derived from laterite deposits, a number of iron works were producing very high quality iron with a rich hematite content. The most well-known site that is mentioned in all the local gazetteers is Jamwār that is situated less than 2km from Udayagiri. It is the nearest hill that can be seen to the north of Udayagiri.

Remains of iron smelting furnaces from Naikund, Bāgh and Gwalior are important reminders of the developed metal technology in Central India. As to the iron ores used Luard has this to say:

'In former times, Gwalior derived great prosperity from its richness in iron ores. These belong to a type frequently

met with in the areas occupied by Bijāwar outcrops, where dyke-shaped breccias follow lines of fracture or faulting. The siliceous matrix or the breccia is usually highly ferruginous, often so much so as to become a rich iron ore consisting of nearly pure hematite. A fault, whose throw amounts in places to nearly 3,000 feet, separates the Vindhyans from the Bijāwars in the southern part of the district, and is accompanied by a considerable development of breccia. It is along this line that the richest ores are found and have mostly been extracted. Huge chasms represent the old quarries from which a vast amount of this ore has been obtained and extensive mounds of slag indicate the former position of many ancient furnaces, fragments of the furnaces themselves occasionally remaining. The last struggling remnants of this industry that had flourished continuously for several centuries disappeared some thirty or forty years ago'.[37]

Certain place-names in the vicinity of Udayagiri also point to the presence of iron and iron works. A village to the south in Rāisen district is called Lohāpura, literally 'iron settlement'. Another village nearby was called 'Agariā'. Agariās are a forest community traditionally engaged in iron smelting. They extracted iron from very low-grade deposits and their iron is reported to have high malleability. More significant is Lohangi Pīr, the towering rock in Vidiśā town, only 2-3kms east of Udayagiri. The name Lohangi viz. Loha+āngi means a 'body of iron' or 'limb of iron'. The shape of Lohangi hill stands as proof of extensive mining that may have taken place here for the extraction of iron, as one side of the mountain seems to have been quarried for raw material. Significantly there are no sculptures to be found which are made out of stone from Lohangi and the mining was for ore rather than sculpture.

The one ancient sculpture at Lohangi (a capital of the second or first century BCE) is made of stone cut either at Nāgouri or Udayagiri. Therefore, if the Iron Pillar was actually manufactured in Vidiśā the most likely location for its placement could have been Udayagiri. This was the most important Vaiṣṇava site in the area, and was visited by Candragupta II, who, as we have seen, was interested in its development. And ofcourse the inscription on the Iron Pillar mentions Candragupta.

Viṣṇupadagiri

Having dealt with the stylistic and metallurgical aspects of the Iron Pillar, we can now turn to the cultic aspects. The key point here is that the inscription, as already noted, describes the establishment of the Iron Pillar at Viṣṇupadagiri. The essential question here is whether Udayagiri can be identified as Viṣṇupadagiri.

Viṣṇupadagiri is a word formed out of three words Viṣṇu, *Pada* and *Giri*. Combined they mean that hill which is made sacred by the presence of the feet of Viṣṇnu. The name Viṣṇupadagiri seems to be ultimately based on *Ṛgveda* (1.154) which mentions Viṣṇu's three strides.[38] Sakāpuni,[39] one of the ancient commentators, interprets the three strides as the course of solar deity through the three divisions of the universe, the god being manifest in a three-fold form: Agnī on earth, Indra or Vāyu in the atmosphere and Sūrya in the sky. Aurnabhava, another old interpreter of the Vedas, is of opinion that the three strides relate to the apparent progress of the sun through the firmament. He associates the three steps with *samārohana*, *viṣṇupada*, and *gayāsiras*.[40] Kane argues that the last two words mentioned by Aurnabhava may refer to holy places in Gayā.[41] This, however, is not substantiated by the archaeological finds there. In spite of

Kane and Pual Debajani building the case of Gayā being Viṣṇupadagiri the remains on the site cannot be dated before tenth century CE.[42]

Bakker thinks that 'the Viṣṇupada were preferably situated on the top of hills or mountains; it may have its origin in the idea that the strides of Viṣṇu were taken along the *axis mundi*, represented by the primordial hill of Vedic cosmogony or in later Hinduism by a mountain in the centre of the inner continent (*Jambudvīpa*), that is to the north of the subcontinent.'[43] This substantiates the claim of Udayagiri, as the temple on the top of the northern hill seems to have belonged to Āditya-Viṣṇu or simply to the Viṣṇupada. The tank on top of the northern hill at Udayagiri next to the temple with an attached cistern of monolithic sandstone, is another element that supports the claim to Viṣṇupadagiri. There are references to taking a bath in the Viṣṇupada on top of a hill in Mahābhārata.[44] The Vāyupurāṇa describes a *saras* (lake) named Viṣṇupada on the mountain Nisādha[45]. The identity of Nisādha has been discussed extensively.[46] Law places it not far from Vidarbha while Wilson thinks that it was near the Vindhyas and Payosni river, near to the roads leading from Rksa mountain to Avantī and the south, as well as to Vidarbha and Kosāla.[47] Burgess places it to the south of Mālwa. The Payosni is the river divided from the Narmada by Vaidurya (Vindhyan) mountains. All the evidence thus places mount Nisādha close to Vidiśā, especially if the crossroads are taken into consideration.

Parsorā and Udayagiri

The 'three steps', in course of time, merged with stories relating to the dwarf incarnation of the Purānic Viṣṇu.[48] In iconography the Vāmana incarnation of Viṣṇu

falls under two categories, one the dwarf (Vāmana) and the other the huge colossus (Virātarūpa) about to take three steps (Trivikrama). Numerous Trivikramas are carved on a hill called Satmarhiā or Parsorā near Badoh-Pathari in Vidiśā district (Photo-25).[49] Seven Śiva caves of Gupta period are also cut into the hillside at this site, along with rows of Viṣṇu, Mahiśāsuramardinī, *saptamātṛkās* and Varāha images.[50]

All the images and caves are inspired by Udayagiri but without an understanding of the whole concept; the result is that there is no particular scheme or pattern to the layout. For example, the *saptamātṛkā* panel on the lintel of one of the caves shows Mahiśāsuramardinī in the middle and a *vīnā* player at the end. An especially important and initially puzzling difference between Parsorā and Udayagiri is the great number of Trivikrama images at Parsorā. This iconography is repeated again and again in a number of small rock-cut panels.

Given that all the themes at Parsorā are derived from Udayagiri it seems that the Trivikrama should also have the same source. There is, however, no such image at Udayagiri and no other site where iconographic forms were so developed around 400CE. The lack of a proto-type can be explained by the fact that Udayagiri has lost much fifth century material. This however, is not a very satisfying explanation in that the sheer number of Trivikramas at Parsorā would lead us to think that at least some sort of fragmentary residue would have survived. The key blank seems to be filled by the huge ruined Gupta-period temple on the summit of the northern hill at Udayagiri. There is no trace of the main image but we think that it is not far-stretched to imagine this as a Vaiṣṇava temple dedicated to the sacred feet of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇupada).

Sanctuaries with *padas* are rare and there appears to be no temple with *padas* as the main object of worship that belongs to Gupta period. The worshiping of feet, however, is an old tradition in India with textual references in both Sanskrit and Pali literature. Worshipping of *padas* is also depicted in Buddhist art, notably the carvings at Amarāvati. It is only in Gupta period, however, that epigraphic and literary references clearly point to the 'footprint sanctuaries'.[51]

Viṣṇupada in Vidiśā area

The suggestion that the ruined temple on the northern hill was dedicated to Viṣṇu's *pada* is not purely speculative. There is much evidence to show that this cult was both ancient and prevalent in the immediate vicinity of Udayagiri. The first hint comes from the Heliodorus pillar inscription.[52] This epigraph is well known for its historical information and for the fact that it documents an early form of the Vaiṣṇava cult. What has often been ignored is the closing statement that records the three steps to heaven.[53] Although clearly not the Trivikrama story in full Purāṇic form, this record nevertheless shows the idea of making three steps to heaven was associated with Vaiṣṇava faith, and with the Udayagiri area, from at least the second century BCE.

A second indication of the Viṣṇupada cult is a location not far from the Heliodorus pillar, about half a km from the confluence of the river Bes and Betwā. There one finds a small island called 'Carana tīrth'. The name means the holy bathing place (*tīrth*) of the feet (*caran*). Cunningham who noted two holes in the rock that were worshipped as *caran*

(*padas*) was the first writer to mention this place.[54] The island is still considered holy and is a *tīrth* where the *padas* of Viṣṇu are worshipped. Two relatively new temples have been built here with Śiva *liṅgas* in the sanctum. Four *padas* of Viṣṇu are placed on platforms built in the bathing *ghāt* in front. The Viṣṇupadas on platforms are inscribed with the name of the donors and are relatively modern, carrying dates of Samāvat*a 1856, 1970 and 1994*.

There is, however, one Viṣṇupada which is undated but which belongs to Paramāra times (Photo 26). Additionally there are four pillars of a late Gupta temple embedded in the floor of the *ghāts* in front of the temples. The design of these pillars (2m high) is the same as in temple 36 at Sānchī (Photo 27). The evidence thus points to religious activity at *Caran tīrth* from at least the seventh century and an association with Viṣṇupada from at least the eleventh century.

The third example of the worship of *padas*, although not of Viṣṇu, can be seen in the Jain Cave 20 at Udayagiri hills. Here the *padas* of Śītalānāthjī are kept and are worshipped by the Jains. The tradition is supposed to be ancient and continues even today. It is however difficult to determine the antiquities of the *padas* as they seem to have been restored.

The fourth example can be found in the form of a brick that was found by the author in the park to the west of Udayagiri hills (Photo 28). This brick, which can be dated to Kuṣāṇa period, is 40 x 40 x 7.5 cms and of the same dimension as the bricks from Satadhāra *stūpa*.[55] On one side of the brick is an impression of a foot that has been dragged from one end and pressed in the centre. Three lines forming two sides of a square are impressed in such a way as to touch the front of the foot. It is extremely unlikely

that this is just an idle impression. Like hand prints of devotees on monuments it must carry some sort of cult significance. While there is no direct evidence that this is Viṣṇu's *pada*, the brick is significant for it shows the importance of the veneration of feet at Udayagiri itself from the second or third century CE.

The fifth example of Viṣṇupada worship comes in the form of an inscription. The inscription is on a rock-cut pillar inside Cave 19.[56] It is written in eight lines of *nāgarī* and carries the date *Vikrama year 1093* (circa AD 1036-37). Michael Willis has described the inscription in his paper on 'Five inscriptions from Udayagiri.'[57] He says:'The record is of some interest because it indicates that six hundred years after Candragupta there was an historical tradition which continued to associate him with Udayagiri and with the legendary Vikramāditya.' More important for our purposes is the fact that this inscription records the re-dedication of the Cave to Viṣṇupada in the eleventh century. We thus have epigraphic evidence of a tradition linking both Candragupta and Viṣṇupada to Udayagiri, and specifically that a shrine of the Viṣṇupada was built at Udayagiri by the same Gupta king who was involved with the relief sculpture of Varāha and associated inscriptions. Taken with the evidence of Parsorā (given above) the almost inescapable conclusion is that Viṣṇupada were in the temple on the north hill and that this part of Udayagiri's iconographic scheme was originally even more important than the Varāha panel. The text and translation are given below:

CAVE 19 INSCRIPTION

TEXT: nāmo srijirnnodhāri
Kānha pranāmati
Viṣṇupadau nityam

Samvat 1093
Candraguptena kī
Rtanam kīrtiamh
Pascāt vikra
Mādityarajyamh.

TRANSLATION: Obeisance! Kānha, the glorious restorer of that which has decayed, bows forever to the feet of Viṣṇu. The year 1093 after the reign of Vikramāditya. The temple was made by Candragupta.

Viṣṇupada: other evidence

The word Viṣṇupada occurs in the seal from Basarh in eastern India.[58] Bloch describes it as having an ornamental triśūla in the centre, to the right a staff consisting of seven dots, *śaṅkha* and solar disc, to left symbol of the moon and a wheel. Below is the two lined legend -

Sri- Viṣṇupadasvāmi-Nā-
rāya (ṇa).

Meaning, 'Nārāyaṇa, the lord of the illustrious Viṣṇupada.' Bloch further remarks: 'It looks as if the seal came from the authorities of a temple of Viṣṇupada, perhaps the famous shrine of Gayā. If I am right the seal would prove the existence of this temple in the fourth century AD.' As we shall see below this is almost certainly a wrong conclusion.

Amongst the many seals from Basarh were two of the Gupta kings. One of the seals was of Dhruvasvāmini who is referred to as the wife of Candragupta II in a four line legend that reads as follows:

Mahārājādhirāja-śri-Candragupta-
Patni mahārāja-śri-Govindagupta-
Mātā mahādevi śri-Dhru-
vasvāmini.

The seal mentioning Viṣṇupada and shows a *śrivatsa* that is similar to the one on the chest of Viṣṇu carved in front of Cave 6 and another on a Viṣṇu image discovered from Heliodorus column by Bhandārkar. The design of the *śrivatsa* does not occur again at any other place in this form.[59] The design of the *śrivatsa* and the mention of Dhruvasvāmini, the queen of Candragupta, who, as noted above, is intimately linked with Vidiśā and with Candragupta's conquest in western India, points towards Udayagiri as the likely place of origin of these seals. Basarh, as is well know, was the seat of Lacchavis and is identified with Vaiśāli, the home of maternal grandmother of Candragupta II. The relation of Basarh with Vidiśā was therefore a close one in the Gupta period. Bakker's work on the Vākātaka court has shown that there were close and continuous links with the Guptas. Any movement of elites back and forth would have passed through Vidīśā.[60]

The seals at Basarh were found in the pit of a square closed well. It was called a well because the approach appears to be from the top, although the place was more likely a storehouse for records. The seals mentioned here were amongst 720 pieces with about 1,100 seal impressions on them. They represent at least 120 varieties of officials, guilds, corporations, temples and individuals. We therefore, do not need to tie these seals to the place where they were found especially as they are impressions of original rings and intaglios. Documents, especially royal ones, would have been produced in considerable numbers and circulated throughout the kingdom. As Dhruvasvāminī is historically tied to Vidīśā it is not unreasonable to see the original document as having been issued from there.

Importantly the seal mentions Viṣṇu Nārāyana as the lord of illustrious Viṣṇupada. This almost certainly refers

to the Viṣṇu Nārāyana at Udayagiri where the large sculpture is located at the base of the hill (Photo 16).

Dhvaja stambhas

All that has been argued so far is further substantiated by the tradition of establishing *dhvajas* in general and Garuḍa *dhvajas* in particular, in the region of Vidiśā. The most famous Garuḍa *dhvaja* and one that has drawn attention several times already, is that consecrated by Heliodorus, an ambassador of the Greek ruler of Taxila, Antialkidas. In the course of research by the author for the present work, the base of the Garuḍa that crowned the Heliodorus column was found in the collection of the Gwalior Museum. This will be published separately in due course (Photos 12, 13 & 14).

The inscription on the *stambha* establishes the tradition of dedicating *dhvaja stambhas* to the deities, a fact that is depicted in the sculptures of Bhārhut and Sānchī. These *dhvaja-stambhas* had bird and animal capitals and different gods had different animals associated with them. The five Heroes (Pañcvīras) of Vṛṣṇi clan had the following bird/ animal emblems on their banners:[61]

Vāsudeva	Garuḍa
Sankarṣaṇa (Balarāma)	Tāla (Palmate)
Praduman	Makara
Aniruddha	White Antelope
Sambha	uncertain

H.H.Lake discovered an inscribed shaft of another Garuḍa *dhvaja-stambha* in the streets of Vidiśā town in 1910. The shaft's fragment that is in Gwalior Museum mentions 'Bhāgavata son of Gotami, caused a Garuḍa *dhvaja* to be made in connection with *Prasādottam* of Bhāgavata when Maharaja Bhāgavata had been crowned 12 years'. This reference to

Prasādottam may indicate the presence of a second Vāsudeva temple in addition to that besides the Heliodorus pillar.

Tāla-dhavajas found from Besnagar near Heliodorus pillar not only meant that Sankarṣaṇa was also worshipped but it also confirms that the practice of raising pillars was well accepted and well entrenched. The Kalpadruma dedicated to Kubera and the Makara *dhvaja* dedicated to Praduman, also from Besnagar, adds strength to the argument that the tradition of dedicating *dhvajas* was a well established practice before the Guptas. A Garuḍa *dhvaja-stambha* exists at Eran and was dedicated to Viṣṇu during the Gupta period. It therefore makes sense that Candragupta II, while setting up this landmark Vaiṣṇava centre at Udayagiri, should have erected one or more pillars.

Unlike the Mauryan pillars, which were '*Dhamma-stambhas*' according to the inscriptions carved on them, the later examples carried specific emblems for specific gods. The Iron Pillar is a *dhvaja-stambha* that almost certainly carried a metal image of Garuḍa. Given that Udayagiri was one of the great Vaiṣṇava sites of the Gupta period, it is virtually unthinkable that it would have been without a Garuḍa *stambha*. The necessary gap is filled by the Iron Pillar.

The meaning, purpose and aesthetics of Udayagiri, as shown by all the evidence given above, provide the most appropriate setting.

Columns and their movement

If the Iron Pillar was located at Udayagiri, as argued above, then we need to find the historical agent who took it to Delhi. This shifting of the pillar should make sense in terms of the later historical events of Vidiśā. For the purpose of finding who and how of the move, it is useful to

look at other examples, notably the two pillars that were brought to Delhi by Firuz Shah Tughluq.

The Meerut and Toprā Pillars

The pillars erected by Aśoka and other pillars such as *dhvaja stambhas* invoked various reactions from later rulers, foreigner visitors and invaders: disbelief, admiration, curiosity and awe. Filled with surprise the incomers wanted to take them, re-use them, break them or simply to own them. It meant anything from war booty to a possession of marvel. The initial reaction of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-88), who was impressed with the two monolithic pillars of Mauryan Empire, was to carry them from the jungle to his capital in Delhi. The original purpose of the pillar was not known to him but contemporary accounts of the moving operation reflects a changed meaning. Like all collections, it was the symbol of his own power and dominion.

Firuz Shah had the two pillars erected in prominent places in Delhi. The pillars were big (Meerut pillar 10.6m high, Toprā pillar 13m high) and shifting them without damage involved facing many technical difficulties and risks. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* by Shams Sirāj Afif tells how the sultan noticed the two columns in the course of his military campaigns. He had one (which came to be called the Minar-i-Zarin or Golden Column) transported and erected in his palace at Firuzabad near the banks of the Yamunā, and the other in his Kushk-i-Shikar or Hunting Palace.[62]

In the words of Afif; 'We are told that the Sultan was filled with admiration when he saw the pillars and decided to move them to Delhi as trophies. The description of moving of the Delhi-Toprā (Minar-i-Zarin) pillar tells of orders issued to people living in and around Toprā village, and also to soldiers, directing them to assemble at the column, bringing with them various implements and materials,

including large quantities of silk cotton from the *semal* (S. malabarica) tree. When the earth around the column was carefully removed, it fell on the bed of silk cotton that had been prepared for it. It was then encased in reeds and raw hides and carefully moved onto a specially constructed carriage with forty-two wheels. Men pulled at the ropes attached to the wheels, and in this manner the pillar slowly made its way to the banks of Yamunā. Here the Sultan came in person to meet it. The pillar was then heaved onto several boats tied together and taken by river to its new home in Delhi. At Firuzabad, it was raised to its present position in the palace complex with great ingenuity, skill and labour.'

The point of narrating these events is to establish that pillars, in spite of their size or perhaps because of it, fascinated the kings of Delhi so much that the desire to take them as curiosities or trophies was too strong to resist. These stories also show that the shifting of column without damage was well within the technical ability of the Sultanate.

Dhār Iron Pillar

The iron column at Dhār is broken and a fragment is currently in Lāt Masjid about which Luard writes:[63]

'A mosque that was erected by Dilāwar Khan out of Jain temple remains in 1405 takes its name from an iron pillar (*lāt*) that is lying outside. There is an inscription upon the pillar stating that Akbar rested here in the eighth year of Asfundiaz and the forty fourth year of Julusi, i.e. 1008 A.H. or 1599/1600[64]. As the record would be upside down were the pillar erect, it must have been put up as a *Jayastambha* in commemoration of a victory probably in the time of Arjuna Varman Paramāra (1210-16). Jehangir in his diary mentions that Sultan Bahādur of Gujarāt wished to remove it, but that

it fell and broke in two. It was originally 43 feet high but now lies in several pieces.'

Iron pillar of Dhār is mentioned in *Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri* that states as noted above that part of it was installed at Akbar's tomb by Jehangir. What is important in this case is that it shows a long history of interest in special columns and more particularly in the movement of such columns (or their fragments) to centres of political power.

Iron Pillar

There are two facts that can be established from the above examples: (1) That the pillars had been shifted in the past by people who were alien to the region, and (2) that the people who moved the pillars did not understand their original purpose or meaning.

The moving of the Iron Pillar can be understood in the same context. The first invader who came to central India and who left behind a record of destruction and looting was Iltutmish. Paramāra temples were pulled down and it is recorded that he took the Śivaliṅga of Mahākāla at Ujjain to Delhi and there broke it into pieces.[65] In Vidiśā, Iltutmish is recorded to have destroyed the Sun temple of Bhāillasvāmi. The location of this temple is not certain but Willis has argued that building was located on Udayagiri hill.[66] Whether we accept this or not, we have direct historical evidence for the conquest of Iltutmish in the thirteenth century and for his removal of the main image of the Sun God. Within the traditions of the Sultanate it was therefore highly probable that Iltutmish shifted the Iron Pillar to Delhi and installed in the mosque next to which he built his tomb.

Viṣṇupadagiri and Udayagiri

Certain conclusions flow from the above mentioned arguments. First and foremost is that the Iron Pillar was originally at Udayagiri. From this it follows that Udayagiri was once known as Viṣṇupadagiri referred. The question which naturally follows from this is when did Viṣṇupadagiri come to be called Udayagiri and under what circumstances? There is nothing in the social memory of the people or in textual and oral records. The only source that is left are epigraphic records that are incomplete, damaged and few in number. Much, therefore, needs to be read from very little.

The earliest reference to this hill is by Kālīdāsa in his poem 'Meghadūtam'. Calling it by the name 'nicaigiri' (maybe he is not referring to the name and means 'low hill') he refers to the lovers from the city indulging in the love activities in the caves on this hill.

Kālīdāsa writes[67]

'There you shall alight seeking rest on Nicai hill
thrilling with delight at your touch
as kadambas burst into sudden bloom;
the hill loudly proclaims through grottoes
exhaling fragrances of pleasure,
passions unrestrained of the city's youth
dallying there in love-sports with courtesans.'

The words are addressed to The Cloud Messenger carrying a forlorn love message sent by the Yakṣa, who is banished from the kingdom of Alakā, to his distant wife. Alakā, situated on Mt. Kailāsa, is a magnificent walled city where dwell not only Yakṣas, but also Kinnara, Munīs, Gandharvas and Rākṣasas.

Doubts can, however, be raised on the identification of the Nicaigiri with Udayagiri. Objections can be raised on the ground that it would not have been possible for Kālīdāsa to have missed the large Varāha panel engraved here. He makes no mention of the panels and images carved on the hillside. This means that either the hill mentioned is some other place or that the poetry was written before the caves were carved with Vaiṣṇava idols. Nevertheless, not much history can be built on the reference, as it is too short and ambiguous. There also seems to be no connection between the names Nicaigiri and Udayagiri.

The focus therefore falls on Udayāditya who was a sun worshipper and was active in Vidiśā region in eleventh Century CE. He built the temple of Śiva at a town called Udayapur, currently in Vidiśā district. The temple is called Udayeśvaramahādeva after him. He also made tanks and named them Udayāsāgara. Incidentally, the earliest inscription with the name Udayagiri coincides with Udayāditya's making and naming of the said temple, town and tank.[68]

From the fragments lying at Udayagiri and also the making of Bījā Mandala, a large temple in Vidiśā, which are contemporary, it appears Udayāditya was also active in this area. Chances are that he restored or rebuilt the Sun temple at Viṣṇupadagiri and renamed it Udayagiri. The fact that the Iron Pillar at Dhār is attributed to his time only substantiates the hypothesis, i.e. that Udayāditya may have seen the Iron Pillar at Udayagiri and then ordered an even larger one for Dhār, the Parmāra capital city. If this were the case it means the Iron Pillar was on site till the twelfth century and was removed only in the thirteenth century. This fits in well with our earlier suggestion that Iltutmish caused the removal of the Iron Pillar from Udayagiri to Delhi.

Conclusion

As the arguments in this section have become diffuse we can summarised them in point form by way of conclusion.

1. The Iron Pillar at Mehrauli is inscribed with a record mentioning king Candra, now recognized as Candragupta II by most historians.
2. The author of the text of this inscription seems to be Vīrasena who was also responsible for the Cave 7 inscription at Udayagiri.
3. The legends connecting the pillar to Delhi are unreliable and probably began only in the Tugluk period.
4. The style and typology of the Iron Pillar capital link it to Central India, specifically Udayagiri.
5. There was a strong tradition of Iron working in Central India from very early times, at least from the second century BCE.
6. The main object of worship on the northern hilltop at Udayagiri seems to have been Viṣṇupada as shown by (a) Parasorā, a site which follows Udayagiri iconographically; (b) by both earlier and later evidence of Viṣṇupada and Viṣṇupada worship in the immediate area of Vidiśā; (c) by an inscription on the site itself that mentions Viṣṇupada worship in the eleventh century CE; (d) by the mention of Viṣṇupada in a seal archaeologically associated with a royal seal of Dhruvsvāminī.
7. The tradition of erecting pillars around temples was well established by the fifth century and would have necessitated Candragupta adding one to Udayagiri.
8. The activity of the Sultanate with regard to ancient pillars suggests that they would have taken an

interest in the Iron Pillar as both a trophy and a curiosity. As Iltutmish was on the site in order to destroy the Sun temple, this would have provided an historical opportunity to collect the pillar and arrange its removal.

9. Udayagiri seems to have acquired its name in the time of Udayāditya, the Paramāra king who appears to have refurbished the Sun temple.

[1] Fleet, *CII*, 3, Inscription No.32, pp.170-173.

[2] Upinder Singh, *Ancient Delhi*. (Delhi, 1999), p.80.

[3] D.R Bhandārkar & others(revised & ed.), *CII*, 3, p. 57. Viṣṇupada as per Bhandārkar was located in the Himalayas, close to the source of the Beas river.

[4] Smith surmises, that Viṣṇupadagiri (Mount of Vishnu's feet) referred to as the location for the Pillar in the inscription could well have been in Mathurā, the ancient pilgrim centre.

[5] M.Joshi and S.K.Gupta (ed.), *King Candra and the Mehrauli Pillar*. (1989). The views of Indian researchers on the subject Mehrauli pillar inscription are recorded in the book.

[6] The reference to the word Candraprakasa comes in the 9th century text *Kāvyalankarasutravrtti* by Vāmana. The reference is to Vāsubandhu, the famous Buddhist scholar, who was the minister of "Candraprakasa the son of Candra Gupta". As much is not known of the patronage extended by Kumaragupta, the son of Candragupta II, it is concluded that it refers to Samudragupta. I think negative evidence is no evidence in this case and Candraprakasa could still be Kumaragupta.

[7] Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, p.96[111].

[8] Inscription at Udayagiri records the coming of Candragupta II to Udayagiri with his minister of war called Viraṣeṇa.

[9] Candragupta II had come to Udaygiri during his world conquest campaign.

[10] Roy Udai Narain, *Studies in Ancient History*, pp. 4-25.

[11] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 272.

[12] Roy Udai Narain, *Studies*, p.22.

[13] Fleet, *CII*, 3, inscription no.61, pp. 324-27.

[14] How the name Delhi (Dhillī) was perhaps derived from Yoginipura, one of the ancient name attested, is a separate question outside the scope of the present work.

[15] T.R.Anantharaman, *The Rustless Wonder A Study of the Iron Pillar at Delhi*. (Delhi, 1996), pp.1-13.

[16] Y.D.Sharma,- *Delhi & its neighborhood*. (New Delhi: ASI, 1991), p.16. Ref. JASB- XLIII Pl.-I, p 108. Yogininpur occurs as an alternative of Dhilli in the Pālam Bāoli inscription which also mention the village of Palmas.

[17] T.R.Anantharaman, *The Rustless Wonder*, p.41.

[18] Christopher Tadgell, *The History of Architecture in India*. (London, 1994), p.156.

[19] Willis, "Architecture in Central India under the Kacchapaghāta rulers". *South Asia Studies 12*. London. The paper shows an 11th century pillar from Quwwat-ul-Islam. A full study of Delhi pillars is yet to be undertaken.

[20] Richard Salomon, The History of Indian Epigraphic Studies. In; *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 199-200.

[21] Gwalior Museum Acc. No. 380.

[22] Vidiśā Museum Acc. No. 89.

[23] Joanna Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*. p. 49.

[24] Coomaraswamy; *Yakṣa*, (Delhi, 1980).

[25] Bhandārkar, Besnagar; Marshal, *Monuments of Sānchī*.

[26] Hegde K.T.M.; *An Introduction to Ancient Indian Metallurgy*, (Banglore, 1991), p. 51.

[27] Marshall, *Monuments of Sānchī*.

[28] Law, *Historical Geography*, p. 337 [14].

[29] Bhandārkar, *ASI AR* 1913-14, p. 206.

[30] Marshall, *Monuments of Sānchi*, p.51.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Anantharaman, *Rustless Wonder*, p.105.

[33] Mr. Chaturvedi (Director-in-charge), Geological Survey of India, Operation Madhya Pradesh, in personal correspondence (D.O.No.331/RKC/GSI/OPMP/Misc. dated 21.02.2001)

[34] Lahiri, Nayanjyot: *The Archaeology of Indian Trade Routes Upto c 200 BC, Resource Use, Resource Access and Lines of Communication.* (Delhi, 1992), pp. 324-25 [Shrivastav 1979: 16]).

[35] Ibid., p.329 [Jacobsen 1975:88].

[36] Shaw, Julia; *Saṇchī and its Archaeological Landscape: Buddhism and the Social Change in Central India.* (to be published Ph.D. thesis from Cambridge University, 2001).

[37] Luard, *The Imperial Gazetteer Western States of Malwā*, (Calcutta, 1908), p. 391.

[38] Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Textual Sources for the Study of Hinduism.* (UK, 1988). The translated version on p. 28 is as following:- 2.2.1.2: The Three Strides of Vishnu; " Let me now sing the heroic deeds of Vishnu, who has measured apart the realms of earth, who propped up the upper dwelling-place, striding far as he stepped forth three times. They praise for his deeds Vishnu who lurks in the mountains, wandering like a ferocious wild beast, in whose three wide strides all creatures dwell. Let this song of inspiration go forth to Vishnu the wide-striding bull who lives in the mountains, who alone with but three steps, measured apart this long, far reaching dwelling-place. In his three footprints, inexhaustibly full of honey, people rejoice in the sacrificial drink. Alone, he supports threefold the earth and the sky and all creatures. Would that I might reach his dear place of refuge, where men who love the gods rejoice. For there one draws close to the wide-striding Vishnu; there, in his highest footsteps, is the fountain of honey. We wish to go to your dwelling-places, where there are untiring, many-horned cattle. There the highest footstep of the wide-stepping bull shines brightly down".

[39] Banerjee, *Hindu Iconography*, p. 418.

[40] Ibid., p. 419.

[41] Hans Bakker, The Footprints of the Lord. In; Diana Eck (ed.), *Devotion Divine.* (Paris, 1991), p. 20 (3); Kane 1, 647: "I therefore hold that at least 600 years before Christ (and hence even before the Buddha) there was a tradition about Viṣṇu's footprints in at least two well known places viz. Viṣṇupada and Gayaśiras (both in Gayā). To which Jacques's understanding is that the 'silent argument' of Mahābhārata on Gayā should be read as a positive that the Viṣṇupada did not exist at Gayā at the time when this passage of MB was composed".

[42] Bakker, *Devotion Divine*, p. 21(5); On Debajani Paul-: "Debajani Paul totally ignores the arguments put forward by Jacques. Actually, the argument of Paul is informed from beginning to the end by the idea that the Viṣṇupada in Gayā belongs to the oldest stratum of this holy place, despite the fact that she is forced to admit that also in the sphere of archaeology there is little to support this idea, since the oldest datable evidence of a Viṣṇupada in Gayā is a [à.] stone slab presently under worship in the compound of the Viṣṇupada Temple at Gaya [à] Presently, relying on the treatment of the lotus podium, we may assign the Gayā example to the Pālā period, more specifically to 10th century CE)".

[43] Ibid., p. 21.

[44] Ibid., p. 22; "Tirthayatraparvan mentions a tirtha called Vamanaka where a bath can be taken in the Viṣṇupada (MBh. 3.81.86-87). Bakker

says "The prescription to take a bath in the Viṣṇupada is less odd than it seems at first sight, if one thinks of a depression or hollow on a hill/mountain top, which was thought to have been caused by Vishnu's footstep, but latter filled with water".

[45] Ibid., p. 22 (8); Vāyupurāna 47.64; cp. Matsyapurāna 121.66, Brahmāndapurāna 51.66 and Alberuni II, 142. Cp. Jacques 1962, XLIII.

[46] Law, *Historical Geography*, p. 325.

[47] Ibid., p.325.

[48] Ibid., p. 418; Vāmana is Viṣṇu's fifth avatāra. Virocana's son Bali, the grandson of Prahalād (a great devotee of Hari like his grandfather) conquered the three worlds and became arrogant in the process. The devās then went to Viṣṇu to save them. Viṣṇu became the dwarf Brahmachāri who asked for only that portion of the earth which he could cover by pacing three steps. When Bali granted this request the dwarf was suddenly transformed into a colossus; covering the whole of the universe in two steps and placing his third step on the head of his devotee he sent him to live in the nether regions.

[49] *Indian Archaeology: A Review* 1958-9, pl. LXXV a-c. pp. 71.

[50] Carmel Berkson, *Artibus Asiae*,Vol. XL, 2/3.

[51] Bakker, *Devotion Divine*, pp. 19-37.

[52] Richard Solomon, *Indian Epigraphy A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages.* (Oxford, 1998), pp.265-66.

[53] Solomon, *Inscriptions in Sanskrit*, pp. 265-267. The inscription B (on the other side of the Heliodorus Pillar)

1. Trini amutapād(ā)ni [i][me?][su]anuṭhitāni
2. Neyamti sva[gam] dam[e] cāga apramāda

Translation

1. (These?) three steps to immortality, when correctly followed,
2. lead to heaven: control, generosity, and attention.

[54] Cunningham, *ASI Tour Reports Vol. X.*, p.36.

[55] Verified on site.

[56] Willis Michael, Inscriptions From Udayagiri.

[57] Ibid.

[58] T.Bloch, Excavations at Basarh. In; *ASI AR*, (1903-4, pp.110); seal no. 31.

[59] What is however interesting is that Banerjee thinks that the ornament in the central position is not triśūla but Kaustubha, and says that Bhandārkar saw the sign on the breast of Viṣṇu figure sculptured in the verandah of Cave 6 at Udayagiri bearing the date 82 as also in the breast of Garuḍa which crowned the Besnagar column. The design of the Kaustubha can be found only on this image and on the breast of Viṣṇu at Udayagiri Cave 6.

[60] Willis, forthcoming paper.

[61] Banerjee, *Hindu Iconography*, p.93.

[62] Upinder Singh, *Ancient Delhi*. (N.Delhi, 1999), p. 58 [36]. H.M.Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historian: Tarikh-i-firoz Shahi of Shams-I-Siraj,* (Calcutta, 1953), reprint, pp. 91-5.

[63] Luard, *Dhār Imperial Gaz.*, (1908, pp. 498).

[64] Archaeological Survey Report 1902-3, p.203.

[65] Ajay Mitra Shastri, Religious Study of the Symbols on the Local coins of Central India, in which he refers to the Mahākāla image in worship at Ujjain as referred to by Alberuni (E.Sachau, *Alberunis India*, I,p. 202), later, Iltutmish carried it to Delhi where in front of the

mosque it was broken to pieces, vide, Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India,* p.98.

[66] Willis, Inscriptions from Udayagiri, (2001).

[67] Candra Rajan's, *The complete works of Kalidasa*, p.299.

[68] Willis, Inscriptions From Udayagiri, number 4. 'Inscription Mentioning the Sun God'. D. C. Sircar, Two Inscriptions from Bhilsa, *Epigrahia Indica* 30 (1953-54), pp. 215-16.

CHAPTER VI

UDAYAGIRI DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD: ASTRONOMICAL BEARING OF THE SITE

The aim of this Chapter is not to conclusively prove that Udayagiri was an astronomical observatory during Gupta period, but to show the possibilities of it being one. Vedic astronomers such as Mr. P. V. Holay (Nāgpur) and Dr Bālāsubramaniam (Indian Institute of Technology, Kānpur) were consulted to get a clearer understanding of the astronomical aspects of the site. This subject is difficult and requires understanding of ancient astronomical texts combined with prolonged observation to be able to explain how the site may have worked. Observations were taken and shadows were measured on solstice days and both equinoxes. The observations are mentioned below and did show some patterns but detailed interpretation is beyond the scope of this thesis and best left to the later stage. The arguments that the site could have been an astronomical observatory is based on the following:

1. The location of the site and the alignment of the major monuments.

2. *nakṣatṛa cakra* (literally 'zodiac cycle')

3. Sun Temple at Udayagiri

The location of the site and the alignment of the major monuments.

Udayagiri falls on the Tropic of Cancer. That the location on the northern hilltop was intended for astronomical purposes is apparent from the selection of the site alone. Studies conducted by astronomer N.K.Rao on the Sun temple of Modhera, which also falls on the Tropic of Cancer, show that the building of the temple, the tank and the *śikharas* were based on the position of the sun such as solstices and equinoxes.[1] As mentioned in the Chapter III, even in the extant literature on astronomy, Tropic of Cancer is the preferred location for the siting of astronomical observatories. On this line the sun at noon on the summer solstice day casts no shadows on the longest day of the year.

The Tropic of Cancer known in Indian terminology as *Karka Rekhā*, currently moves south by about 15 m per year. At present it is somewhat south of Sānchī, but due to the irregular orbit of the earth it moves back and forth. Historians of science have been able to calculate the movement, thus in 400 CE the tropic was a few kilometers north of Udayagiri at 23°39′ while at present it is at 23°26′.[2] As already mentioned in Chapter I, Udayagiri is located at 23°31' latitude and 77°49' longitude.

The solar year is divided into four quarters by the equinoxes and solstices. The vernal and autumnal equinoxes are the two points of time, six months apart (about 21 March and 22 September) when the day and night are of equal length. The winter and summer solstices (around 21 December and 22 June) are the northern hemisphere's

shortest and longest days. At the equinoxes the sun rises due east and sets due west, but from the vernal equinox to the autumnal equinox the sun rises north of due east, and from the autumnal equinox to the vernal equinox it rises south of due east. The solstices are the time when the sun has reached the extreme northern and southern points when it rises on the horizon. Sunset against the contours of the horizon was carefully noted by the ancient stargazers. In India as elsewhere, astronomical shift in the position of the points of sunrise was noted and observations were made primarily at Tropic of Cancer.[3]

At Udayagiri the observations were carried out by the author on the stump of the column at the temple on the northern hilltop (Photo 29). This is located toward the southeast corner of the temple. The broken shaft of the fallen column is still lying besides the stump on the hill. Cunningham described the stump in this position when he first visited Udayagiri in 1876-7. The earth dug around the stump indicates that attempt(s) had been made in the past to uproot it from here but these failed and there is no doubt that the stump is in its original location. The column is located in relation to the temple in a precise manner and would have served part of the purpose for which the temple was meant.

The height of the column was at least 10m and was mounted by a capital with four lions standing on an inverted lotus (Photo 30).[4] The capital is currently in the museum at Gwalior and was found at the bottom of the hill in front of the Cave 19 where it had rolled down when the temple was destroyed. It is of the Mauryan type with inverted lotus mounted by four seated lions facing the

four directions. The shaft and the lions are polished in what is known as Mauryan polish. It is however, the abacus of the capital that is relevant to the current theme (Photo 31). The abacus is 18.5cm broad and has seated figures in discs accompanied by zodiac signs such as *makara*, *siṃha*, *karka*, *mithuna* and *kumbha* in anthropomorphic form (Photo 48). Each pair of zodiac signs and the men in the disc are divided from the others by three circular pellets placed vertically one above the other. The seated men have been identified as Ādityas, another name of Sun god.[5] The abacus is broken and the seated figures should have been twelve in number when complete. The Ādityas are seated on stools and most of them hold a pot in their left hand; two, however, hold a rosary. The shape of the pot differs from oval to round, and is held from below with the back of the hand supported on the thigh. The right hand is bent from the elbow with open palm facing upwards. The seven remaining Ādityas are as follows:-

1. Holds a rosary in his left hand, is bearded and wears a strange hat (Fig. 5a).

2. Has the same characteristics as the first (Fig. 5b).

3. Seated on a stool, is bearded, wears a loincloth and holds an oblong pot in his left hand (Fig.5c).

4. Very damaged.

5. Very damaged.

6. Seated, without beard, holds something like *couri* (whisk) in the folded raised right hand, and has Gupta style curly hair (Fig. 5d).

7. Wears a *dhoti* (lower garment), holds a *kalaśa* in his left hand and wears a *Kirīṭmukuṭa* with a central disc and a necklace (Fig. 5e).

Debala Mitra has identified this group at Udaygiri as headed by Indra and Varuna. They are carved on the top row of figure behind the Varāha relief.[6]

On the abacus of the capital each seated figure is accompanied by a zodiac figure (*rāsi*), which has an animal head with human body. They are as follows:

1. Dhanus

2. Makara

3. kumbha

4. Mina

5. Meśa

6. Vṛshabha

7. Mithuna

8. Karkātakā

9. Siṃha

Images of Kanyā, Tulā, and Vṛscika on the broken face would complete the zodiac cycle of twelve.[7] The cycle is

arranged in a counter-clockwise direction at the abacus. The seated figures, as just noticed, are the Ādityas. According to Dikshit the ādityas are the twelve aspects of the sun, connected with the twelve months.[8] He may have based this identification on the disc behind and the zodiac images around.

The seated Āditya-*rāsi* pair is divided from the next by a vertical band of three pellets. These pellets may represent stars or could indicate time. No other known examples of these dots appear anywhere as either fillers or stars. There is however a panel from Amarāvati currently in the British Museum, where three scenes from the life of Buddha are depicted. The depiction is organised horizontally. The first scene is of Siddhārtha in his palace. He is shown seated on a chair and the court women are shown all around him in various states of sleep. The second scene shows the prince leaving the palace with his horse and valet. In the third scene there is a *yāvana* couple drinking wine. The three scenes are divided by circular dots, three in a vertical row just like the Udayagiri example, only a little larger. The dot in the centre has a seated figure just like the Ādityas in the abacus from Udayagiri. This matter needs to be examined in greater detail as it represents one possible source for the knowledge and artistic influence.

Nakṣatra cakra from northern hill top

Bhandārkar found another panel from Udayagiri temple site on the northern hilltop. The panel is currently in Gwalior Museum.[9] It is a fragment of a circular disc 25cm thick, made in sandstone. The fragment is carved on both sides and has a smaller lotus on one side while on the other are circular discs with seated figures on the outer ring of a larger lotus. This lotus is similar to the lotus in caves 7 and 17. The circular disc shows a seated man with splayed legs. Accompanying this man seated on a stool are oval discs. Six oval discs can be seen in the fragment with each showing a female figure riding a *vāhana* (Photo 32). These are as follows:

1. In the first the goddess is shown sitting on a bird with left foot dangling below and right leg folded on top, right hand resting on the thigh and left hand resting on the knee (Photo 33).

2. The second goddess sits on a horse or ass with her left foot folded on top and left hand holding the ear of the animal. She has her right hand on the waist and wears a scarf that hangs on her right shoulder.

3. It is difficult to identify the *vāhana* of the third goddess. She sits with a circular disc under her left hand. She wears a loincloth and a scarf is thrown over her right shoulder.

4. The fourth goddess is seated on a stool. Her left foot is folded and the scarf hangs on her left shoulder.

5. The fifth goddess is also seated on a stool with right leg folded. Upper part of the image is broken.

6. The sixth goddess is shown seated on a stool with both feet folded. Upper part is broken.

All the seated female figures have hair parted in the centre and curled into a roll on both the sides. Conical jewelry adorns the tip of their heads along with a necklace and circular *kundalas*. The *kundalas* and the conical piece on the head are similar to the jewelry on one of the *Mātṛkās* figures from Besnagar (Photo 34).[10]

The identification of these figures is problematic and as yet there has been no satisfactory suggestion as to who they might be. The male figure in the circular disc is very similar to the Ādityas in the abacus. On completing the picture of the lotus the possibility of 27 or 28 circular discs seems likely. In Vedānga Jyotiṣa, a Vedic Almanac, we find that the ecliptic is divided into 27-28 divisions called '*nakṣatras*' that are named according to the asterism comprising it. Every '*nakṣatras*' has a corresponding deity. The possibility of these images being '*nakṣatras*' therefore seems probable. The matter, however, needs to he studied in further detail, particularly to see if any female iconography has ever been attached to the '*nakṣatras*'.

The four lion capital has a circular shaft in the centre where the backs of the lions meet. This circular shaft projects above the lions by 8cms and is 30cms in diameter. A 5cms deep and 23cms dia. notch on the shaft suggests that it was topped with something. Examples of Mauryan and Gupta column mounted by a circular wheel exist

in nearby Sānchī. The fragment discussed above is carved on both sides and should have been placed in a vertical position so that the carvings are visible from both sides. Conjecturally this circular disc should have come on top of the four lion capital. The two fragments are thematically related and therefore, the position of '*nakṣatras cakra*' on top of the column is a possibility (Maps 54 to 56).

Sun Temple at Udayagiri

As already mentioned in Chapter I, the hill is associated with the worship of Sun in the social memory of the local people. A *Yatrā* is held on the *Kārtik Mahā* on the *navami* (ninth day) of the *śukla pakśa* (bright fortnight) known as *Akśaya Navami* or *Yugādhi Navami*. On the 5thNovember 2000 I walked in the *Yatrā* which circumambulated around Udayagiri (Photo 35). On this day *Niśān* (flags or standards) from the temples of Vidiśā are taken out in a procession which touches fifteen spots. These spots are dispersed around Udayagiri in such a way that a *parikramā* of the hill is performed. During the course of their *parikramā* they offer worship to the two river goddesses, Śiva, Viśnu, Ganeśa, Rāma and Sūrya among other gods. This worship takes place at different spots that are marked as halting places. Narsiṁha śila that lies to the south west of Udayagiri hills is one of the major halts. Recitation of poems, short talks and other activities are organized here. The *Yatrā* proceeds via Rās *ghāt* to Cave 19 and finally ends at the Rāmlīlā ground after halting at many places in between. It takes the whole day to accomplish the complete circuit.

Amongst the places visited is Cave 1. Here the people worship the Sun god. Cave 1 is on the southern hill and the image within is considered to be that of the Sun god. The image is so damaged that it is difficult to identify. Both the Hindus and the Jains make conflicting claims as to its identity.

There are a few important aspects to the *Yatrā*, namely:

1. The celebration is related to *Jyotiṣa Śāstra* and the position of the Sun.

2. It is calendar related, which is in keeping with the nature of the construction at Udayagiri.

3. Women who circumambulate around the *āmla* tree, worship the '*āmla*' tree (myrobalan) on this day. This fruit is closely related to temple architecture and this element of temple architecture comes at the top of the *śikhara*.

The association of Udayagiri hills with Sūrya worship in the social memory of the people gains importance when seen in the light of inscriptions relating to Sūrya temple. One such inscription that mentions both Sūrya temple and Udayagiri has already been referred to above.

During the course of my exploration I came across a number of fragments which support the traditional association of the hills to Sūrya. The most interesting is a fragmentary Sūrya (lintel block) at the foot of Udayagiri (Photo 36). This is in two pieces the torso and the lotus supported by seven horses as another. Folded legs of the god can be seen on the lotus, while the torso

shows an armoured vest. The head is missing. That the lintel block belongs to around tenth century CE shows that the association of the hills with Sūrya worship continued even after the intervention of Vaiṣṇava iconography during Gupta period. But early Vaiṣṇava imagery and Sūrya are quite close; it is in later times that the two are separated and distinguished iconographically.

The association of Udayagiri and the astronomical aspects of the iconography of many of the images show in our view that the site is organised around the measurement of time. Chapter XIV of Mānādhyāy of the Sūrya Siddhānta deals with the modes of measuring time.[11] It lists nine methods, namely those of Brahmā, of the gods, of the Fathers, of Prajāpati, of Jupiter, and solar (*sāura*), civil (*sāvana*), lunar, and sidereal time. There are three ślokas that are cited below which throw light on the astronomical significance of Udayagiri. The relevant verses are quoted below as mentioned in the text:[12]

' (3) By solar (*sāura*) time are determined the measure of the day and night, the *shaḍaçītimukhas*, the solstice (*ayana*), the equinox (*vishuvat*), and the propitious period of the sun's entrance into a sign (*sankrānti*).[13]

(7) In the midst of the zodiac (*bhacakra*) are the two equinoxes (*vishuvat*), situated upon the same diameter (*samsūtraga*), and likewise the two solstices (*ayana*); these four are well known.

(8) Between these are, in each case, two entrances (*sankrānti*); from the immediateness of the entrance are to be known the two feet of Viṣṇu.

And

(9) From the sun's entrance (*sankrānti*) into Capricorn, six months are his northern progress (*uttarāyaṇa*); so likewise, from the beginning of Cancer, six months are his southern progress (*dakshiṇāyana*)'.

Burgess's commentary explains verse (8) thus: 'In each quadrant, the entrance (*sankrānti*) immediately following the solstice or equinox is styled 'Viṣṇu's feet'. In the earliest Hindu mythology, Viṣṇu is the sun, especially considered as occupying successively the three stations of the orient horizon, the meridian, and the occident horizon; and the three steps by which he strides through the sky are his only distinctive characteristic. These three steps then appear under various forms in later Vaiṣṇava mythology, and there is plainly some reference to them in this designation of the sun's entrance into the signs. It seems easiest and most natural to recognize in the three signs intervening between the equinox and solstice Viṣṇu's three steps, and to regard the two intermediate entrances as the marks of his feet; this may possibly be the figure intended to be conveyed by the language of the text.'

In Chapter III there are references to the identification of Candragupta II with the epithet Vikramāditya. This in turn lends itself to identification with Trīvikrama + Āditya where the three steps of Viṣṇu are recognised as the three phases of the sun in the sky. We argued that Candragupta Vikramāditya II was projecting his image as Vikramāditya through the developments at Udayagiri hills. The astronomical assembly at Udayagiri lends itself to be interpreted as the two steps of

Trīvikrama, the two phases of the Sūrya and the two victorious steps of Candragupta Vikramāditya II. This can be read in the inscription on the Iron Pillar at Mehrauli and also on the legends in his coins.

A twin image, i.e., an image with figures back to back, is identified by Dikshit as Sūrya.[14] The piece is from Pawāyā and is now in the Museum at Gwalior; it seems to have been mounted on a pillar. The crowns (*mukuṭas*) represent varieties of *Kiṛiṭa-mukuṭa*. Dikshit opines that they represent the Ādityas, viz. Indra and Viṣṇu - the latter being also known as Upendra, i.e. smaller Indra. One image is smaller than the other. The image is mentioned here because it represents the merging of the concepts of the Ādityas, Sūrya and Viṣṇu. The relationship of Pawāyā and Besnagar was strong as they were ruled by the same Nāga dynasty immediately prior to the Gupta conquest, the date of the Pawāyā sculpture. The exchange of iconography ideas can be seen in the occurrence of images of the fan palm capital, Narasiṁha image and Yakṣas at the two places in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. As a consequence, when we think of the main deity in the temple at the northern hilltop this double image of Sūrya should be regarded as an iconographic possibility. A candidate for the temple image was found during my research when I discovered two photographs of a broken sculpture excavated from the northern hilltop (Photos 37 & 38). The first photograph shows the front of the image and the second shows the back. The face is missing. It wears a *śrivatsa* on its chest. The photograph of its rear shows a lotus on the back of the head with a serpentine string from it falling down to its waist. Part of a flower garland (also visible in the photograph of the back), does

not survive on the front pose. The figure is about 1.25m in its broken form. Although the identity of the image remains an open question, it appears to be the only surviving candidate as the main image due to its size.

[1] N.Kamaswara Rao, Sun Temple at Modhera, Bulletin of The Astronomical Society of India; Proceedings of the Workshop on 'Heritage of Ancient Indian Astronomy, IUCAA, Pune, Oct.31- November 4,1994, Vol.26, (1998 March, No.1)

[2] I thank Michael Willis for this piece of information, which is so vital to the study of this site from the point of view of Astronomy.

[3] Sūrya Siddhānta is one of the foremost astronomical treatises, said to have been revealed to Maya an Asura. In its Chapter I, 61-65. In this śloka the method of measuring the mean place of the planets at a given midnight upon the prime meridian is mentioned. The geographical position of the prime meridian (rekhā, literally line) is stated. It says "Situated upon the line which passes through the haunt of the rākśasas and the mountain which is the seat of the gods, are Rohītaka and Avantī, as also the sannihitaṁ saraḥ (adjacent lake)". The location of Avantī in this can be read as Vidiśā.

[4] The height of the column is calculated from the taper in the 3mt fragment still on the site.

[5] Williams, Dvādasādityas (12 aspects of the Sun, connected with the 12 months) according to Dikshit.

[6] Debala Mitra, Varāha-Cave of Udayagiri, pp. 100-101.

[7] Joanna Williams, A Recut Aśokan Capital and Gupta Attitude towards the Past, *Artibus Asiae 35,* (1973), p.238.

[8] S.K.Dikshit, *A Guide to The Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior.* (Gwalior, 1962) p.15.

[9] Acc. No.279.

[10] Mātṛikās are currently in Gwalior Museum. Cf. D.R.Patil, Sapta Mātṛikās from Besnagar, *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress,* (1949).

[11] Phanindralal Gangooly (ed.)(1935),Translated with noted and Appendix by Rev. Ebenezer Burgess (1880), *Sūrya Siddhānta, pg. 311-313.*

[12] Ibid., pp. 311-313.

[13] Ibid., pp. 311-313.

[14] Dikshit, *Gwalior Museum* p.13.

CHAPTER VII

UDAYAGIRI DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD: WATER SYSTEMS, CONTROLS AND ARCHITECTURE

At Udayagiri the multiple *śākhās* (branches of a jamb) of foliage on the doorjamb and river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā at the threshold transposed the worshipper from the outside world of the mundane to the land of the gods within the cave. The scheme is symbolically organized with the two rivers defining the sacred landscape, purifying the worshipper before entering the inner chamber (Map 20). Among the water cosmology symbols that the artists of Udayagiri employed were lotuses and *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* (a pot of abundance). In this world of the sacred space and sacred time lotuses blossom and abundance is visualized in the form of *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* overflowing with vegetative growth. Water is also present in the form of cosmic ocean on which Viṣṇu floats sleeping on the coils of Śeṣa *nāga*. On the lintel of Cave 19, gods and demons are shown churning the ocean to extract the elixir of life (Photo 49). In the Varāha panel the ocean is depicted in the form of wavy lines from the depths of which the earth is brought out by the god. This feat is enacted in the sacred enclosure defined by the two river goddesses.

This is the conceptual 'map' of Udayagiri as depicted in its iconography. Cartographically, the two rivers Bes and Betwā, garlanding the hills like the *vanamālā* of Viṣṇu, define the sacred. It is clear from the imagery that water is integral to this cosmological schema. Traces of water canals, channels, tanks and cisterns are some of the remains of the water network that knitted the landscape into one conceptual, mythical whole (Map 61). Harvesting and manipulating water, therefore, was the preliminary and fundamental element in the exercise.

The myth of the descent of Gaṅgā is enacted at Udayagiri, albeit in a miniature form. Sage Agastya of the *Ṛgveda*, who is reputed to have humbled the Vindhya, stayed in a hermitage to the south of Vindhyas on Mt. Kunjara.[1] He is known to have given Viṣṇu's bow to Rāma who visited him while in exile from Ayodhya. Sage Agastya once drank the ocean dry, with the result that Bhagirathi could not get any water to perform the rites of his ancestors. He accordingly did penance to bring down the celestial river Gaṅgā to earth. However, the immense power of the river could be brought down from the heavens only with the help of Śiva who received her full force in his matted hair. Meandering through the dark hair, she is known to have then gently descended to the earth purifying the souls of the ancestors who could then ascend to heavens. From the matted locks of Śiva she is known to have descended in seven streams known as Sapta-Sindhavā.[2]

The seven strands of hair on the *mukhaliṅga* in Cave 4 represent the Sapṭa-Sindhavā (Photo 45). After the ritualistic ablution of the *liṅga*, water was drained out of the cave through the hole in the outer wall. The *mātṛkās* in the half-cave nearby went through

a similar ritual. The drains and the watermarks highlight the course of the drained water. The caves were closed with door shutters, while the *mātṛkās* were partially cut off from the outside with a 90cm high railing. The holy water was received below in a tank that stretched across to Cave 7 to the north and Cave 2 to the south. All this is now completely dry.

There were four independent water systems once in operation at Udayagiri (Map 61). The first, which may have been associated with bathing rituals, consists of a monolithic cistern and a tank, located near the temple on the northern hill (Map 62). The second system is located near Narasiṁha *silā* to the west of the hills where a deep trench was dug to carry water from the river to the rock or the other way around. The tanks of the third system are the largest and form an important part of the architectural scheme (Maps 63 & 64). Two smaller tanks crafted out of the rock near Cave 20 forms part of the fourth water systems that exist at Udayagiri.

The first system consists of a large cistern crafted out of a 6.90 x.4.75 x 1.10m block of sandstone that lies 9m to the southwest end of the temple (Map 57). Four holes drained the water from this cistern to the tank below. Water then fell 45m to the river Bes below. The source of water may have been rainwater collected from the temple roof (Map 62).

There are eight postholes on the vertical surface of the cliff below the cistern and tank just mentioned. These holes are rectangular in section and appear to be meant for rafters of approximately 20 x 15cms.[3] They were made just to the north of the outlet from the tank. Below these holes, and just above the river, is a

horizontal slab, also with postholes. The reason these postholes are important is because of the link they make between the river and the tank above. The level of the water in the river has gone down considerably since the time of Chandragupta II as shown by Lake's excavation of ghāts on this river near Besnagar. This work showed that the level of the riverbed had gone down by 3 to 3.2m.[4] Since then the damming of the river at Bes upstream has further lowered the river. Given therefore, that the river was higher in Gupta times, it seems possible that the post-holes mark the remains of a system that was used to raise water to the tank and cistern during the dry season.

The second water system is towards Narasiṁha *silā* (Map 62). A deep trench, now dry is cut from here to river Bes. Above the rock a crescent shaped depression has been slightly modified by the addition of a barrier. Not much else is visible on the surface at present. Toward the river an environmental park has recently been developed and ancient remains, if any, are difficult to locate in the trees and thick jungle that have grown up.

The third water system is the easiest to trace. The embankment to the west of the passage turns towards north to form an enclosure that is 25m deep. The tank thus formed was probably fed by water from a cavern in a natural rock shelter above and also by the rains. The tank had structures made of bricks and timber and also rock-cut caves and rock shelters along its banks. It appears that the embankment was used as an elephant path too (Photo 39). Traces of the elephant path along the northern edge of the tank leading to the top of the northern hill are still intact in some places (Map 65).

Water from the big tank was brought into the passage (Map 64). The exact means by which this water was moved is uncertain due to the damage of many features. However, it is clear that water flowed down the passage. At present it appears as if there are two sets of stairs in the passage. In fact the lower set (to the north) was a stepped water cascade. This is clear from the water erosion that can still be seen. The Archaeology Department of Gwalior State leveled the lower sections of the water channel in 1929.[5]

On reaching the eastern edge end of the channel the water drained into the tank that touched the feet of Varāha. The marks of the water once touching the feet of the god can still be discerned. However, the tank stands disconnected from the caves by a modern road. Old pictures show the water much closer to the caves. The photo also shows the tank to be of a much larger size and there are reasons to believe it was once much bigger than even the old photographs reveal (Photo 17).

If one reads the flow of water with the sacred schema, the meaning becomes clearer. The water from the north tank appears to have flowed down the northern wall of the passage. There are no sculptures here apart from one notch with a goddess with raised right hand (Photo 50). The image is badly damaged and from the pose it appears to be goddess Gaṅgā. If the morphology of the passage, the tank and the images is taken as a whole, then we realize that water was perceived not just as ordinary water but as Gaṅgā herself. The cosmic time that the iconography in this passage represents has been already mentioned above (Chapter IV). Combining iconography with water features we can see the river Gaṅgā forming the link from one *Kalpa* to the

next, falling at last in the *sāgara* into which all will be submerged at the end of time.

The waters of the *sāgara* once touched the feet of the mighty Varāha, the wavy lines and lotuses on the Varāha panel merging with the actual water and the lotuses of the tank. The cosmic act of the Varāha *avatāra* would have been magnified in the sparkling water the reflected body of the god shining as if still wet and freshly risen from the sea in his act of rescue.

Such a combination of imagery and water had never been attempted before. The visual impact of this poetic narrative in stone and water was so strong that two century later it seems to have inspired the artists of Mahābalipuram to make an analogous tableau showing the descent of Gaṅgā.[6] 'Kiritarjuna' panel at Mahābalipuram was carved on a large surface of rock and a tank was constructed above to hold water that was released to enhance the effect of the carving. The water was collected in a pond all around the rock to make the rock appear like a cosmic mound emerging out of primordial waters.

A much smaller tank is located on the northern hill near Cave 20. A water tank was scooped out of the rock and the water manipulated so as to flow through Cave 20 into another tank cut into the rock just below the cave. Another water system that may not belong directly to the water systems of Udayagiri, is the presence of *ghāts* near the archaeological mound of Madhopur village, on the banks of river Betwā. The location of the *ghāts* is the shortest distance between *sāgara* (tank on the east) and Betwā. Looking at the sacred status of the river the connection may have held

some meaning that is not apparent to us today due to lack of necessary excavations.[7]

Controls

We have already seen how the caves and the half-caves were closed with shutters and railings. The shutters operated on pivots fitted into the notch on the inside of the elaborate doorways. The railing on the other hand was fitted into the groove in the rock and in the column. Grooves of 10cms width indicate that the panel was a stone slab like the solid railing uncovered around the Heliodorus pillar by Bhandārkar. There were two types of railings discovered by Bhandārkar from this site. One was the open and the second the solid railing. The first type is well-known, the most notable specimen of it being Sānchī. The solid railing had stone panels fitted in between columns in grooves. The two types of railings formed an enclosure around the temple of Vāsudeva discovered by M.D.Khare beneath 'Babaji's house' as shown in the map by Bhandārkar.[8]

The grooves and notches on the pilasters outside Cave 4 indicate that the *maṇḍapa* in front was also railed off with the solid type of railing (Map 60). The total implication of these railings becomes clear when we see that the temple complex on the top of northern hilltop has a compound wall running all around the plateau. The dry masonry plinth of this wall is 2.5m wide. Debris of bricks of size 45 x 15 x 55cms can be seen spread on the slope of the hill. The presence of this debris indicates that the superstructure of this peripheral wall must have been of brick. It is possible to work out the method of destruction by studying the spread of debris. It appears the wall was destroyed

from inside to outside; only human could have caused this to happen.

The presence of a fortification wall (Śaivite monasteries of Survāya makes the plausibility of such a supposition acceptable) provides clarity to the presence of elements such as the elephant path and brings meaning to ruined structures by the side of the path. The strategic location of these structures provides a possibility of there being watch towers and surveillance posts.

This would be in keeping with the overall character of the development of this site that had the stamp of the king. Simply interpreted it means power, control and ownership. The grooves and notches above Cave 7 and in the horizontal surfaces on top of the caves in the passage acquire a new meaning when viewed in this light.

Reconstruction of Passage, Caves 3, 4 and 19.

There is no mention of the Brahmanical caves at Udayagiri hills in Vidiśā district in *'The Cave Temples of India'* by Ferguson and Burgess.[9] This is a strange lapse, looking at the formative importance the site has in the development of both temple architecture and iconography. The site also contains epigraphs that have served as a scale for dating works of brahmanical art and architecture. A whole new language of religious art was introduced when the rock-cut caves, in conjunction with the structural *maṇḍapa* in front, lent itself to be developed into temple architecture with the cave as the *garbhagṛiha* and mountain as the *śikhara*.

Main construction is however concentrated around the 'Passage' that is cut across the hill east to west (Maps 08, 59 & 60). The entrance to this was from the east. The 'Passage' is 45m long and has a maximum width of 4mts. There is a drop of 9m between the front cave and the end of the passage. This drop is utilized to provide four levels of rock-cut caves. The Varāha panel that stretches across the face of the rock covers the lowest level at the entrance facing east.

The passage was the single point entry to the entire sacred complex. Cave 7 acts as a reception cave at the entrance. It is the first cave that is encountered and it is here that the important inscription of Vīrasena is engraved. Above the cave was a timber construction, of which only postholes remain. Five circular postholes, four in the corners and one in the centre indicate a single roomed construction on top of this cave (Map 60). This provided height and emphasis to the cave. It is a single cell cave with a lotus on the ceiling (Map 22). The inscription is off centre on the wall opposite the entrance as already noted (Chapter IV). The entrance is guarded by *dvārpālas*.

Caves 3 and 4 come on the southern side of the 'Passage' (Maps 04 & 05). Between Cave 4 and Cave 7 are located Cave 6, *mātṛkā* caves and the Varāha cave. The two Caves 3 and 4 share a common platform in front. Raised by 1.8m from the Varāha cave, this platform contained some important structural additions. The additions have all gone but the traces of their presence can still be seen. Cave 4 appears to have been built in conjunction with the *maṇḍapa* in front. At least six columns must have supported this tabulate structure. The pattern of wearing away of the rocky

floor and the notches for these columns suggest a size of 35 x 35cms as the base of the column.

A column in the museum at Gwalior and a pilaster in Vidiśā museum are worth noting (Photo 40). Both of them are recorded as belonging to Udayagiri, though the exact find place is not noted. The number of facets on the central shaft increase to thirty-two; their extension on the base, body, and lip of the vase above is unique not only among early Gupta but also among later examples. The upper abacus bears a simple all-over pattern like the *kiriṭ-mukuta* of Viṣṇu at Cave 6. Human heads decorate the base along with half medallions on this pillar. The base of the pillar conforms to the notch in front of Cave 4. Williams dates it at 405-415 CE during the time of Candragupta II.[10]

The design of the pillar and the pilaster resemble the pilaster on top of the northern hill. The grooves on the sides suggest it was assembled along with a half railing, a design which is found in Cave 4 and Cave 6 (*mātṛkā* caves) and also on the pilaster carved on the living rock in front of Cave 4 (Map 13). It is therefore no coincidence that the thickness and the size of the grooves are also the same. The possibility of the column belonging to the structural *maṇḍapa* in front of Cave 4 is very high.

Other than the *maṇḍapa* the acoustical quality of Cave 4 is also of significance. The presence of the musical instruments on the lintel of Cave 4 may be relevant when we notice the acoustical quality of the cave (Photo 51). The amplification of sound without distortion or echo creates vibrations even when *ślokas* are recited at a low pitch. This quality is highly

noticeable. The acoustical quality was found missing in the other caves on this site. Presence of scenes of music and dance in the Varāha Panel nearby, where the descent of Gaṅgā is accompanied with celestial dance and music, can be seen as part of the overall scheme. The five musicians that accompany the descent of the river goddesses carry *vīnā*, lute and flute. Nārada who is the inventor of *vīnā* is shown to the south of the Varāha, a distinctive position. Tumburu who is also a *gandharva* musician, stands next to him playing a guitar.[11] The musical skill of Tumburu and Nārada is well recognized in the Gupta period, and Samudragupta in the Allahabad pillar inscription is said to have excelled these two by his musical accomplishments.[12] The duo represents celestial musicians. This symbolic representation of music is continued on the lintel of Cave 4 where a *vīnā* is carved on the two corner *candraśālās* on the lintel. On one side a man is shown playing *vīnā* and on the other side a guitar.

The juxtaposition of Cave 4 with the Varāha cave and the iconography showing music and dance in these two caves accompanied with the platform in front of Caves 3 and 4, may have had a special utility. The depiction of musical instruments and musicians is not common to all the caves at Udayagiri. The setting of these caves with the large platform in front is very theatre-like and the possibility of them being used as stage for performing arts cannot be ruled out. Sanskrit plays mention dance and music festivals extensively.

Cave 19 is another cave where there is a possibility of acoustical qualities, but the quality is not as distinct as in Cave 4. Cave 19 is located at the northern end of the hills. The cave is guarded by *dvārpālas*. Four columns (in situ) placed centrally at a

distance of 1.94m towards the east formed a 7.75m long *antarāla* between the *maṇḍapa* and the *garbhagṛha*. Only one column of the central four columns of the *maṇḍapa* exists on the site today although, a 1913 photograph from the ASI archive shows two such columns (Photo 52). Traces of structural remains of any other columns cannot be confirmed today because of the paving done by Garde in 1929. The surviving column that is octagonal, sixteen sided, has a *grīvā* (neck) and a *ghaṭa* (pot). On its top there is a row of small *gaṇas* on the circular abacus. The upper part of the *ghaṭa* shows *nāga puśpa* flowers on the circular rim. These columns were placed directly in alignment to the central columns of the *antarāla*.

From the general layout of the remains of the pillars it appears that there was a *maṇḍapa* in front of the *antarāla*. Two pillar stubs on the side of the only surviving pillar may have been part of the outer limits of the hall. Cunningham (Cave 9 by his numbering) suggested a size of '27feet square' for the hall in front of the verandah.[13] The hall appears to be contemporary to the cave and the pillars within. Williams on the other hand proposes the possibility of these being *dhvaja stambhas*.[14] The alignment of the columns however supports the first hypothesis and her views need to be rejected as incorrect.

Patil's theory that the pillars were removed from the temple on the hilltop to construct the porch does not hold ground as there is no similarity between the remains on the hilltop and the pillars below. The corner pillars of the *antarāla* however, are very similar to the jamb remains on the top of the hill. In all probability the jamb fragments from the top of the hill were placed in a similar position as the ones in

front of Cave 19 that are *in situ*. It only goes to show that the temple on the top of the hill was contemporary to Cave 19, which was the last one to be excavated on the site. One of the *mukhaliṅgas* placed inside the cave (there are currently two *liṅgas* on the *pīthā* today), comes from the subsidiary shrines from the hilltop. Photograph of the sixteen faces excavated from the hill shows a *mukhaliṅga* that is very similar to the one in Cave 19 in both its size and style. There is a possibility that the *mukhaliṅga* in Cave 19 is the one shown in the photograph (Photos 21 & 23).

The plateau on the northern hilltop was accessible from two sides of the hill, one from the northeast from near cave 19 and the other from the south (Map 65). The northeast path was meant for pedestrians and consists of steps cut into the living rock. The path appears to be ancient at places and has been repaired and may have been even realigned at some places. It also services Cave 20 that is located at the northern extreme of the hill but at a slightly lower level. This Jain cave has an inscription dating it to 426 CE during the reign of Kumaragupta.[15]

The Jain Cave 20 has a pilaster that shows *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* festooned with pearls, which hangs from rosettes placed around each facet. This motif is common to the pillars in front of Cave 19. On this basis one can say that Cave 19 is contemporaneous to Cave 20 i.e. around 426 CE (Map 40). Williams places it in the second half of the fifth century on the basis of the *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif on the base of the capital.[16]

Reconstruction of Temples midway to the hilltop

The second path (which is also an elephant path) forms the southern approach to the hilltop and takes a circular route over the embankment of the tank located below the hill. Midway to the foot of the hill there is a horizontal sheet rock. This platform is visible against the profile of the hill when seen from a distance (Maps 06 & 07). This advantage was utilized for timber structure thereby linking visually the construction at the base of the hill to the one on the top. Two caves are also carved here on the vertical surface of the rock.

Gaṇeśa is carved in Cave 18, while another Cave 18 (B) is left empty but contains notches for two stone pillars to support the lintel projection (Maps 37,38 & 39). This cave faces the Narsiṁha *silā*, located on the west of the southern hill. It also overlooks the tank towards the west. Remains of what could logically be a watchtower can also be seen on the left of the elephant path at this level.

Gupta temple on the northern hilltop

The elephant path approaches the top of the northern hill from the south (Map 65). The plateau on top of the northern hill is at two levels. Among the structural remains on the plateau is the plinth of a Gupta-period temple.[17] The plinth of this temple was exposed when Bhandārkar excavated the archaeological mound in 1914 (Photo 53).

The excavation conducted by Bhandārkar and the earlier attempt to find Buddhist relics from the site by Lake left the site disturbed.[18] Lake did not write a report. Bhandārkar on the other hand wrote series of

conclusions without describing the finds on which these conclusions were based.[19] My study shows that the grounds for some of his conclusions are not adequate and at times non-existent.

The conclusions in his report are listed below:

1. His first impression after close examination of the site was that the mound was not that of a *stūpa*, yet later in his report he changed his view and says he did not find anything of a 'sensational' character. He however concludes that enough was found to justify the conclusion that the site was occupied by one *stūpa* at least. According to him traces of such a *stūpa* were exposed below the east wall of the platform. In fact he writes, the east wall stands upon the two lower-most stone courses of a *stūpa*. From the segment now preserved the original diameter of the base of this *stūpa* seems to have been 16'8".

Comments: There is one semi-circular stone on the site that must, in all probability, have been used as a *candraśilā*. Other than that I could not come across any structural remains that point towards a Buddhist *stūpa*. Bhandārkar, as we notice, was searching for something of a 'sensational' character. He however concludes that there was at least one *stūpa* here. The disappointment was apparent, and it appears that he was conditioned by his times when Buddhist remains like Sānchī and Bharhut created a great sensation.

2. A shaft stood on the northeast corner of the temple. About this Bhandārkar concludes that the four-lion capital that stood above the shaft was 'no doubt surmounted by a standing figure', the

torso of which was found on the west and the fragment of the halo surrounding whose head on the north, of the platform. Both the faces of the halo are carved.

Comments: My study shows that the circular disc with the images of *nakṣatra* surmounted the pillar. The disc was discovered by Bhandārkar and is currently in Gwalior Museum. A broken torso of a man with a broken head shows part of a lotus on the shoulder. It is a large image more in the nature of a Yakṣa than the main deity but the chances of it being the main deity cannot be ruled out. A *śrīvatsa* is carved on the chest of the image. There are no other characteristic signs or emblems.

3. The next point Bhandārkar takes up is the temple itself, which he says belongs to the later Gupta period. Nothing was traceable on the platform except the foundation walls of its shrine, hall and porch.
   The inner core of the temple platform is not a solid mass of stone construction as might be expected but a network of rubble stone walls packed dry, the intervening spaces being filled with well-rammed brickbats.

Comments: The removal of the well-rammed brickbats erased the evidences of the position of the hall, pillars and the porch pillars. It left the site totally disturbed. It may have also removed the finish of the floor and other surviving evidence.

4. The report refers to 'many fragments of door jambs, door lintels and roof slabs which were found in large quantities, from which it is

possible to imagine what the temple was like originally.'

Comments: I am afraid this means nothing as the large quantities of roof slabs, door lintels are not described anywhere. It made the task of imagining the temple very difficult.

5. No pieces of the spire, however, came to light, and it seems that it was a flat roofed structure like other temples of the Gupta period. Bhandarkar reports of the 'layers of ashes intermixed with iron nails topped by another of tile pieces, both running together all round in undulations', 'all along the north wall of the platform, especially at the north-west corner'. He thinks they were dwelling houses that were built of wooden construction.

Comments: The hypothesis of dwelling houses is very difficult to believe, as there are no other finds of people having stayed there. There are no pottery remains. The ashes, iron nails and tile remains all along the north-west corner, points more towards a timber spire than towards dwelling houses. The *garbhagṛha* is located towards this end and if we take the direction of the wind, the chances of the ash falling on this side are high.

6. We also reports sculpture and roof slabs from the excavation in front of Cave 19. Convinced that its porch was built at some later period and unquestionably out of the materials of the Gupta temple on the hilltop, he concludes that the temple on the hilltop was destroyed prior to 1AD.

Comments: The conclusions are very hasty and without the required understanding. Most of the column remains in front of Cave 19 appear to be *in situ*. They also have greater similarity with the columns inside than with the temple on the hilltop.[20]

Conjectural Reconstruction of the Temple

Bhandārkar reports foundation walls of a shrine, hall and porch on the platform of the temple. Although the plinth has been disturbed due to the archaeological excavation and no records of the site prior to the excavation remain, most of my reconstruction is based on the study of the fragments and the study of other Gupta temple sites. It is unfortunate that most of the Gupta temple sites have been restored according to the then prevalent understanding of the Gupta temples, and are therefore liable to be faulty to some extent.

The temple stood on a high platform facing east. The *garbhgṛha* was located on the west of the platform. It was surrounded by a covered (?) *pradakṣiṇa patha*. The shrine was located in such a way that it left an open *pradakṣiṇa path* around the shrine. Slabs of 2.5m on the site match with the enclosed *pradakṣiṇa* and point towards a covered space spanned with stone slabs.

The approach to the platform was from the east. The steps leading to the top of the temple platform have however, been reassembled. From the current situation it appears that the steps were detached from the main body of the structure, somewhat like the steps at Sānchī main *stūpa*. A plinth of 3.17 x 14.45m projects to the east of the main temple platform on which the steps were located. Parts of the current assembly of steps, however, appear to be in their

original position. Stone headers projecting on the side of the plinth may have held panels containing carved narration like the temple at Deogarh.

My attempts at reconstruction of the temple show that there was a porch in front of the shrine that was similar to that in front of Cave 19. The two also appear to be contemporary to each other, which is towards the first quarter of the fifth century. This is also the time of Cave 20 where the inscription in the cave dates it during Kumāragupta's time.

During the course of my study, photographs of sixteen stone heads from the top of the hill were discovered (Photo 23). There is no mention of these heads in Bhandārkar's report, yet the ASI photo from its archives records Udayagiri hilltop as its find place. Some of these heads seem to have been part of panels. The exact panels or individual images may have been part of the architectural scheme of the temple. At Deogarh, the carved panels were placed on the plinth of the temple. At Udayagiri, the possibility of these heads appearing in a similar position cannot be ruled out. The projection of headers may be part of the structure member to hold these friezes. The fragments however are not many and it appears that they may not have covered the entire temple plinth and instead may have been placed at selected spots. The heads are currently in the museum at Gwalior.

Among the heads in the photograph, are two *mukhaliṅgas*, the first one is small and could have come from a subsidiary shrine. The other one is a head from a larger *liṅga* and wears a *tāntuka cakra* in the ear. This *tāntuka cakra* can be seen on the *mātṛkās* from Besnagar that are currently in the Gwalior museum.

Among the other heads there are at least two Viṣṇu heads, one of which is in the round. The other pieces are difficult to identify but are a fine specimen of Gupta art. Excavation at some of the identified spots on the hill should unearth more fragments and images from the area. It is a pity that only one excavation has been done on this site and that also when Indian archaeology was in its infancy.

Study also shows that the temple had a *maṇḍapa* in front with the columns arranged like those in front of Cave 19. Two large fragments of temple jambs, with the female figure carved on one of its śākhās, are part of this four-pillared *maṇḍapa* (the details of the reconstruction of Cave 19 are given above). Study sheets giving the possible location of the pilaster with two lion abacus shows that it may have formed part of the main jamb (Maps 41 to 44)(Photo 56). The doorjamb may have held the lintel with face dentils as in Cave 6 (Map 20). The presence of two crouching lions with a common face and a semi-circular piece on the site formed part of the entrance steps to the temple above the platform. Other fragments with carvings are part of the temple architecture. Although it is difficult to assign a place for them, possibilities are sketched in a separate sheet (Maps-41 to 58).

There were four large architectural fragments on the hill that had to be turned around to be documented. This was done with the help of six persons from the ASI. The fragments were seen for the first time since they had fallen. It revealed lower half of the jamb piece with lions. The lion fragment has been discussed by scholars and is dated by Williams at 405-415 CE. Another piece was the edge of the doorway with notch for door. Third was a slab piece with festoons on the

edge. Fourth was jamb of the porch that was covered from the side (Photos 54 & 55).

Nakṣatra Cakra

There is a possibility of the lions being surmounted by *nakṣatṛa cakra* (the halo referred to by Bhandārkar, Maps 54 to 56). This is based on firstly the notch on top of the circular projection, which is of the same thickness as the thickness of the *cakra*. Secondly the *cakra* has carvings on both sides indicating a position where it could be seen from both sides. The proposed position would allow this. Thirdly, we find lions mounted by *dhamma-cakras* in Mauryan columns and this one here at Udayagiri is only an adaptation of the tradition. The shaft was at least 10m high and the total height of the column, with the capital and *cakra*, reaches to 14.5m from the surface of the ground.

The capital and its abacus are discussed in detail in Chapter VI that deals with the astronomical application of the monuments. The abacus has carvings of *Ādityas* and *Rāśis* on its abacus. A fragment of a circular disc with carvings on both sides, placed on top of the capital, was also discovered from here. The fragment that is part of a *cakra* has *nakṣatṛas* and *Ādityas* carved on one side. The *nakṣatṛas* are very similar in style to the in-the-round *mātṛkās* from Besnagar. Williams compares these *mātṛkās* to the Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Cave 6.

There are remains of pilasters, coping stones and some other architectural fragments on the plateau, but the largest piece is that of a monolithic cistern. The cistern was part of the water system and is discussed

above. There is however, a high mound some 100m to the south of the temple that holds promise of revealing some significant monument of this period. Further excavation on this site is thus highly recommended.

[1] Dowson, *Dictionary Indian Mythology*, p.108.
[2] Ibid., p.108.
[3] The holes are seen from below but there is no way to reach them.
[4] Lake, Besnagar, p.141.
[5] Garde: "Udayagiri Caves". *Annual Administrative Report of the Archaeology Dept. Gwalior State:* (1939-40 pp.10).
[6] Harle, *Gupta Sculptures*, p.10.
[7] Law, *Historical Geography*, p.337. The river was one of the five-hundred rivers flowing from the Himalayas as mentioned in Miliṅda-Pañho. This river flows into the Yamunā.
[8] Bhandārkar, Besnagar Excavation 1913-14, plate LI.
[9] Ferguson and Burgess, *The Cave Temples of India*, (London, 1880).
[10] Williams, *Gupta India*, photo 47.
[11] Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology*, pp.382-387.
[12] Mitra, 'Varaha-Cave of Udayagiri, pp. 99-103.
[13] Cunningham, *Tour Reports*, 10, p.53.
[14] Williams, *Gupta India*, pp.87-88.
[15] This is the only inscription by Kumargupta at Udayagiri. Fleet, *CII*, 3, 258-60. Williams, *Gupta India*, p.87 [85]. I agree with Williams that the Pārśvanāth's image of the inscription are the images carved on the wall of the cave 20.
[16] Williams, *Gupta India*, p.80.
[17] Bhandārkar, *ASIAR Western Circle.* (1914) part ii (a), excavations 9.
[18] Lake, Besnagar.
[19] Bhandārkar, *ASIAR WC.*
[20] Cunningham's remarks on this cave and the remains in front is lot more valid. CF. Williams, *Gupta India*, p. 88.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

It has been argued in the previous chapters that the construction at Udayagiri hills during the Gupta period was not a random, evolving, unorganized activity but followed a well-laid out design and pattern. The development was taken up under one campaign and was done to achieve certain underlying objectives. Candragupta Vikramāditya II was directly involved in the establishment of this centre. His minister of war Śāba Vīrasena worked with the king at Udayagiri, as is apparent from the epigraphs. The possibility of Śāba Vīrasena having stayed back in Vidiśā to finish the work may have led to the posthumous inscription on the Iron Pillar. The presence of the Iron Pillar at Udayagiri goes well with the intensity of involvement of Candragupta II and Śāba Vīrasena in its development. It need not be repeated that this is the only place that Candragupta II is recorded to have visited and accompanying him was his minister of war Śāba Vīrasena.

Question of Chronology

The precinct had royal patronage and was made in a short span of not more than 28 years. Most of the work appears to have been accomplished in the period between Sanakānika inscription of Cave 6, dated 401/2 CE, and Cave 20 inscription, dated 426 CE. The demise of Candragupta II seems to have taken place in between. This can be inferred from readings of the two inscriptions. The first mentions the rule of Candragupta II as the king and the second

mentions his son and heir Kumāragupta as the ruling head. From the architectural and archaeological remains on the site it appears that the work did not continue for too long after Cave 20.

The two caves act as a scale for dating the rest of the caves. Stylistically, the whole precinct is closely related and seems virtually contemporaneous. From the advanced door jamb carvings of Cave 19 and its more elaborate interiors it is apparent that it was the last to be constructed on this site. The *śākhās* are recessed successively and *nara śākhās* added. The top of the lintel shows 'Churning of the Ocean of Milk', with the Nāga Vāsuki as the rope (Photo 49). There are many inscriptions on the surfaces of this cave, but all of them are later than tenth century. An eleventh century CE inscription is of interest because it shows that 'six centuries after Candragupta II there was a living tradition which associated him with Udayagiri and Vikramāditya.'[1] The capitals of all pilasters and columns in Cave 19 show vases festooned with pearls. The motif is observed in Cave 20 where it occurs in between the two images carved on the northern side of the cave.[2] It therefore appears that Cave 19 either followed Cave 20 or was constructed almost simultaneously.

The standing pillars of the verandah in front of Cave 19, however, are similar to the pillars in the temple on the northern hilltop. The structural jamb with the figure of a female carved on its outer *śākhā* with receding successive branches is a treatment that is common to both the jambs. The jamb in front of Cave 19 is *in situ* and appears to have formed an entrance to the *antarāla*; it may

have followed the design from the temple. Fragments from the temple at the northern hilltop show strong similarities with Cave 6 and Cave 4. Dentils (human heads) on the lintel of Cave 6 (401-2 CE) and the lintel fragments still on the hilltop have similar spacing and expressions. The design of the flower garland that runs just below the heads is also the same.

One of the large remains from the temple at the hilltop is a doorpost. The foliate *śākhā* in the fragment is crafted as energetically as that in Cave 4, a quality that was gradually lost in future work. This quality, to borrow the words of Willis, can be described as frothing upwards with erratic agitation.[3] Williams gives a date of 405-415 CE to this fragment, based on the style of the lions and lotus capital which are like those of Cave 6. The temple work may have started along with the excavation of the caves below. That the temple on the hilltop had a covered *pradakṣina patha,* an *antarāla* and a *maṇḍapa* in front does not make it any later. It only goes to show that the tradition of temple building must have been older than the remains that have come down to us.

The Anantaśāyana and Varāha reliefs were not dated directly by inscription but both panels are treated in a similar manner, almost as if they were two leaves of the same story. The similarity between the two panels is in the large proportions of Viṣṇu as compared to the rest of the characters. Both the panels show Candragupta II kneeling besides the god and as before Vīrasena by his side. In both the panels the Nāga hood has wavy pattern and the leaf arrangement of the long garland and the lotus on top of the deity are some of the common features.[4] Both

were crafted at the same time; that is, around 401-2 CE. It shows that the passage and the cave complex were conceived and visualized as one and were executed simultaneously.

The controversy regarding the date of the images on the facade of Cave 6 is rather unnecessary as all the images appear as part of the larger scheme which is astronomical in nature and therefore appears to have been developed with the rest of the imagery on the site.[5] Each fulfills some aspect of celestial observation and represents either time, a star, planet or constellation. We may not be sure of how exactly the site works as far as astronomical observations go, but it is surely part of the overall agenda of the site and the images were therefore crafted along with the caves and the passage nearby.

There are only a few indications to show that the work continued after Candragupta II. A medallion showing Śiva's family near Cave 19 and few broken pieces near Cave 1 are among the very few remains of seventh century CE. Around seventh century CE the population of Besnagar seems to have started shifting to the present town of Bhilsā (modern Vidisha). A step-well and a massive door lintel are some of the remains from this period in Bhilsā.

The holy precinct of Udayagiri may have, in the meantime, continued to be held in high reverence without any addition in terms of architecture or iconography. However, there seems to be a renewed construction activity around tenth century. Fragments of *āmalaka, stūpi, ratha* frames with Garuda at its base, a Viṣṇu image and several broken heads are a reminder of this activity (Photo 57).

The most important fragment amongst these is Sūrya seated on a lotus and drawn by seven horses (Photo 36). The torso was located at some distance by the author. This important discovery leads one to think that there was some attempt at reviving the Sun temple on this site. The date of the fragment corresponds with the intense construction activity undertaken by Udayāditya in and around Vidiśā. The Paramāras are known to have been Sun worshippers and inscriptions eulogizing the Sun god as Bhāillasvāmi from Vidiśā belong to this period (tenth/ eleventh century CE). It appears that Udayāditya repaired and enlarged upon the, by then decaying, Sun temple at Udayagiri hills. It is also possible that the hill was named Udayagiri since then in tribute to his involvement. It must be remembered that Udayāditya was lending his name to all that he was creating such as the town Udayapur, temple Udayeśvara and the tank Udayasāgara. As mentioned earlier, the first record of the word Udayagiri comes in this period and that too in reference to a Sun temple.[6]

The plausibility of Udayāditya having worked at Udayagiri gains greater credence if we link it up with the Iron Pillar at Udayagiri. The more ambitious Paramāras who were into bigger, larger and better of all things were inspired by the Iron Pillar at Udayagiri to have a larger, bigger and better version of the pillar at Dhār, the centre of their rule. What one can deduce from this conjecture is that the religious centre at Udayagiri was living and may have been even thriving till the eleventh century.

This throws light on the how and when of Udayagiri's destruction. The first big raider who came the Vidiśā way

was Iltitmush. He was an iconoclast and is known to have destroyed images such as the Śiva *liṅga* from the famous Mahākāla temple of Ujjain. He may even be responsible for carrying the Iron Pillar from Udayagiri to Delhi where it stands today. The destruction of the Sun temple by the sultans of Delhi is recorded by the chronicler of Iltitmush in *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*. It also tells us that the main deity of the temple was taken away and thrown down before the gate of Badāūn.[7] An important sculpture of Sūrya of high iconographic sophistication is currently in Vidiśā Museum and could have come from the main niche of the Sun temple.

The destruction of the fabric of the sacred precinct at Udayagiri in the thirteenth century was so total and the material was scattered so far and wide that recovering of this important site may involve detailed excavation along with extensive exploration. The process of making sacred the hills of Udayagiri, which started with the early settlers, continues to date despite the destruction and desecration.

Sacred Geography

The short span in which the entire sacred construction was executed brings out certain salient points. First and foremost, it was constructed under a scheme, which followed a conscious design and plan. Second, there were underlying objectives that governed this design and plan. Third, the site worked as one whole. The possibility that the sacred precinct was demarcated from the secular by a railing and a boundary cannot be ruled out. There are pillars and crossbars lying in the

vicinity though no clear evidence as to how and where the railing was installed has been discovered so far. The concept of an *āyatana* (sacred precinct demarcated by railings) is so integral to the belief in Yakṣas and gods that it would be a surprise if there were no railings at Udayagiri.

As mentioned earlier, railings were unearthed at the Heliodorus pillar site where a Vāsudeva temple stood in the second Century BCE. References to Yakṣa *āyatanas* are found in abundance in sacred literature. The Mahābhārata talks of Yakṣa *āyatanas* where Yudhiṣṭira has a question answer session with the Yakṣas. There is always mention of stepping into the precinct of a god. The concept can be seen clearly in the caves where the holy rivers guard the threshold. The worshipper goes through a symbolic ablution before entering the presence of the god. The concept is visually depicted in the paintings in the rock-shelters of which Udayagiri is a part. If we read the paintings as a conceptual map of the belief systems then we see that enclosing the sacred space was a long and accepted practice.

Sanctity rested not just in the shrines but in the whole landscape of Udayagiri. This sacred zone was fortified and had a central entry, which also meant that it had an organization which managed the establishment. The organization could well have had a seal. The seal from Basarh with the legend Viṣṇupada may well have belonged to the religious organization at Udayagiri.[8] As mentioned earlier, the seal comes from the temple of Viṣṇupada and praises 'Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of the illustrious Viṣṇupada'. This description fits Udayagiri where Lord Nārāyaṇa is

located at the entrance to the temple on the northern hilltop.

The presence of a formal demarcation also makes sense of the layout where Cave 7 appears to act as a reception cave. The structures on top of the southern and northern walls of the passage that have now fallen but were once part of the scheme also make sense when we think of a gate, *toraṇa* and an entry passage. As has been argued earlier, control and surveillance formed part of the scheme. This could work only if the sacred area was formally demarcated. Only an analysis of underlying objectives would clearly define how the site must have worked as a whole and as a single unit.

The underlying objectives of the centre at Udayagiri were not just religious but also political and astronomical. Vaiṣṇava symbolism was used to bring about an amalgamation of diverse religious beliefs and followings. Viṣṇu now stood for Sūrya worshiped as Trīvikrama in his three strides. Although no image of Trīvikrama has yet been found from the site, the possibility of finding one is very high as so far only one excavation has been taken up on the hill.[9] Trīvikrama is so central to the image of Candragupta Vikramāditya II that it is difficult to justify the rise of Vaiṣṇava cult during his reign without bringing in the concept of 'winning the three worlds in three strides'.

As already mentioned, the three strides of Trīvikrama are equated to the defeat of Bāli and the worship of Viṣṇu absorbed and surpassed the Vedic ritual practice of sacrifice.[10] Vedic sacrifices were conducted at Vidiśā. Bhandārkar unearthed *yajña kundas* during the excavations

taken up on the archaeological mounds of Besnagar. The *Yajamāna* of this *yajña* was a Greek called Demitrius. The *yajña* was attended by officials and individuals who left behind seals. Although no evidences were discovered that could tie the *yajña kundas* to the Śunga king, yet the presence of these *kundas* points towards the Vedic practice in Vidiśā during third/fourth century CE. At Nāgorī hill near Sānchī there is an un-caparisoned horse in an unfinished state lying among other 'to be transported' objects. There are other such horses discovered across the country and one of them that is kept in Lucknow museum is inscribed with śaṅkha līpī.[11] B.N.Mukerjee deciphered the epigraph and identified the horse as the replica of the sacrificed horse in the *aśvamedha yajña* performed by the Gupta king Kumāragupta I Mahendra.[12] Therefore, the possibility of the horse being related to the horse of the *aśvamedha yajña* is high. This argument shows that *yajña* was practiced in central India during and before Candragupta II.

The most important and significant political move of Candragupta Vikramāditya II was to surpass this practice and convert it into idolatry, one where the object of worship allegorically represented his ideals and acts. This is not to say that he invented the concept, but that the choice of the image was carefully selected and crafted. Varāha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu fulfilled these criteria. Viṣṇu Purāṇa (Part 1 Ch.4, Sk. 31-44) calls Varāha *yajña puruṣa* where the four Vedas are in his feet, *yajña* is in his teeth, in his mouth is *cittiyans, yajña* fire is his tongue, and the auspicious grass his body hair. His tusks are like *yūpa* on which the earth appears as a lotus leaf. Varāha is frequently called *Yajña Varāha* and text such as

Viṣṇu smṛti describe how each part of the boar corresponds to a part of the Vedic sacrifice. So whether as Vāmana, Trīvikrama or Varāha, we see Viṣṇu absorbing and surpassing (but not it should be noted, destroying) Vedic ritual practice.

This political/religious statement had a visually powerful manifestation. The colossal images worked symbolically as well as visually. Supplemented with water architecture, the iconography was poetry in stone. Plastering and painting the surfaces of these caves further enhanced their effect. The iconography acted as the conceptual map of the scheme and gave insight into the philosophical, mythical and scientific thinking of the time.

The bringing together of images of Mahiṣāsuramardini, Gaṇeśa, Gaṅgā and Yamunā at one place and tying them up with a common theme of time and astronomy put science and religion together with the art and architectural forms to create aesthetically powerful images in mythical spaces. This visual statement had the impact and force to change the course of future thinking and beliefs. The formative importance of Udayagiri was not confined to religion, architecture and iconography but also in the scientific field of astronomy.

A *rāja patha* (royal path) connected the entrance of the complex to the entry gate of the town of Besnagar where a temple existed. At the entrance of the sacred hill of Udayagiri there was a column of iron that declared the intention of the king. Although, the pillar was inscribed posthumously it showed the commitment of the king to the development on this hill. Just behind the pillar was the

entrance cave inscribed with the epigraph of Vīrasena. This epigraph was placed so as to conform with the hierarchy depicted on the Varāha relief where both the king and the minister are carved.

[1] Willis, Inscriptions at Udayagiri.
[2] Williams, *Gupta India*, p. 88.
[3] Personal communication.
[4] Williams, *Gupta India*, p.47.
[5] Ibid., p.43.
[6] Willis, Inscriptions at Udayagiri.
[7] Ibid.
[8] T.Bloch, Excavations At Basarh, *ASI AR 1903-4*, pp.104 & 110. Seal no. (31).
[9]Bhandārkar, *ASI AR 1914-15*
[10] Significantly, Bhandārkar unearthed yajna kundas in the excavations of 1914-15. Twenty one seals were also discovered along with the plinth of a sabha grha and an accompanying hall.
[11] Stone horse near Nagwa in Banaras and another from Khairigarh on the Nepal boarder are two such horses discovered. Cf. B.N.Mukerjee, Decipherment of the Shell Script, in R.K.Sharma ed., *Shell Script*, pp.45-55; Williams, *Gupta India*, p.25[17].

[12] State Museum at Lucknow accession no. H 219. Cf. Mukerjee, opcit. pp.45-55).

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AR: Annual Report.
WC: Western Circle.

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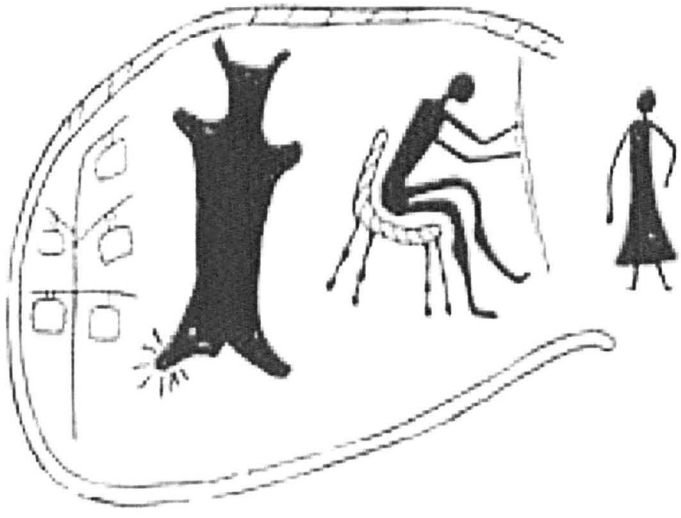
PHOTOGRAPHS

AND

MAPS



SATKUNDA ROCK SHELTERS	01
ROCK PAINTING MAN ON CHAIR (SKETCHES BY ERWIN NEUMEYAR)	PHOTO NO

KHARBAI ROCK SHELTERS	02
ROCK PAINTING: SACRED ENCLOSURE (SKETCH BY ERWIN NEUMEYAR)	PHOTO NO.

FIRENGI BHOPAL ROCK SHELTERS	03
ROCK PAINTING: MUSICAL INSTRUMENT (HARP) (SKETCH BY ERWIN NEUMEYAR)	PHOTO NO.

FIRENGI (BHOPAL) ROCK SHELTER **04**

ROCK PAINTING: CORPSE WITH BIRD

(SKETCH BY ERWIN NEUMEYAR)

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

SHANKALIPI SECOND TYPE

05

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI	06
SHANKHALIPI FOURTH TYPE	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI	07
SHANKHALIPI - FIFTH TYPE	PHOTO NO.

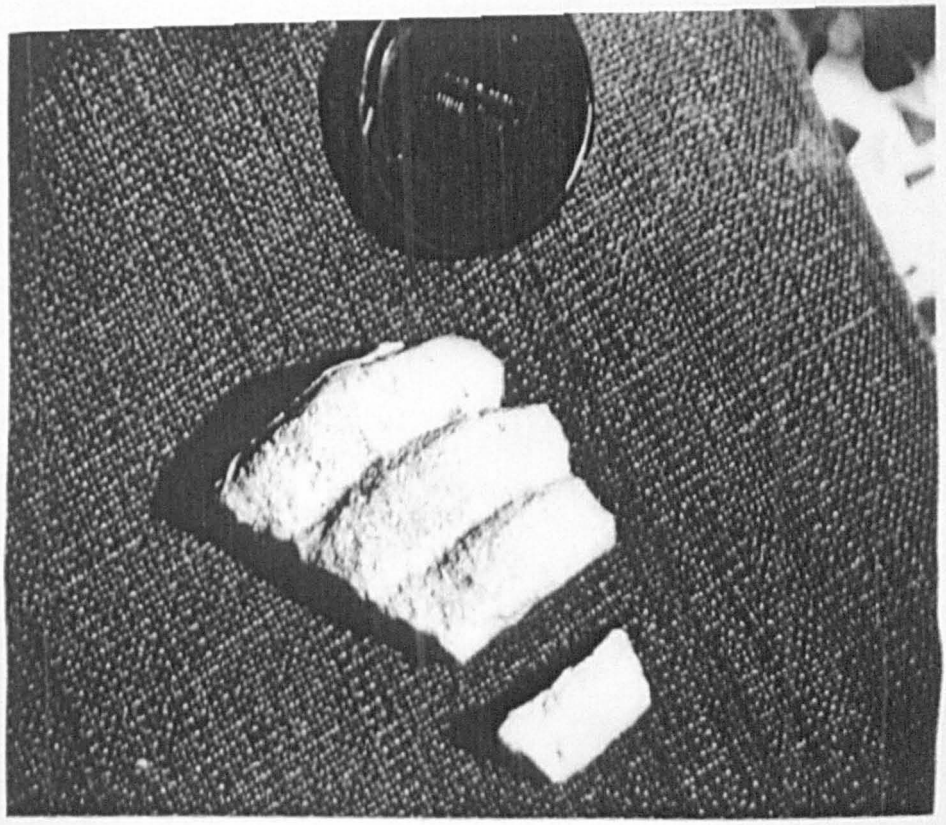
UDAYAGIRI	08
UNKNOWN SCRIPT	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

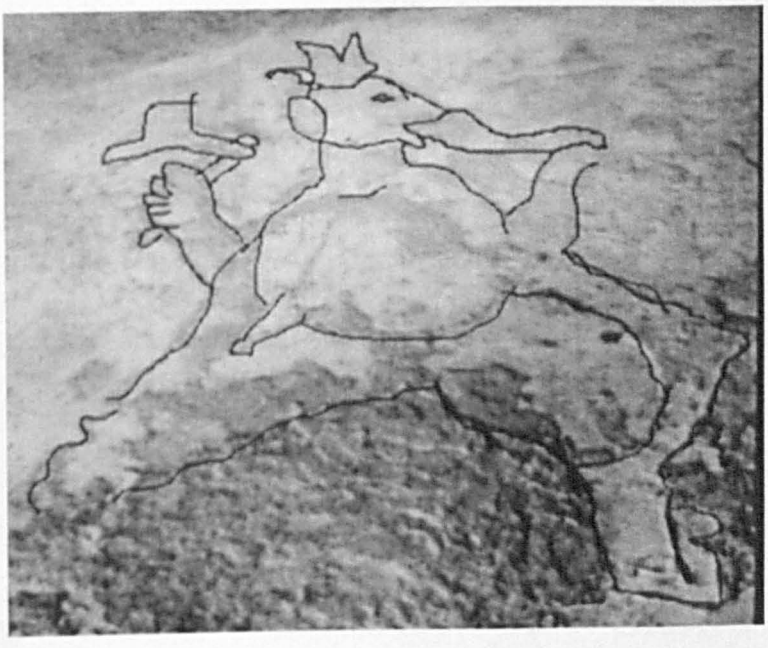
ASI PHOTO (1914) OF SINGLE LION CAPITAL
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

09

PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI	10
CHIP FROM SINGLE LION CAPITAL	PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI	11
CAVE 20 PETROGLYPH OF GANESH AND ITS SKETCH	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

GARUDA CAPITAL GWALIOR MUSEUM

VIEW 1

12

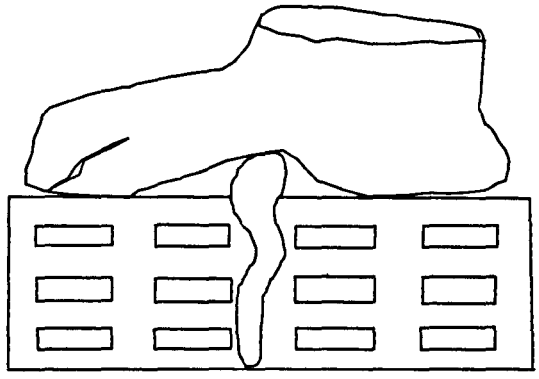
PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

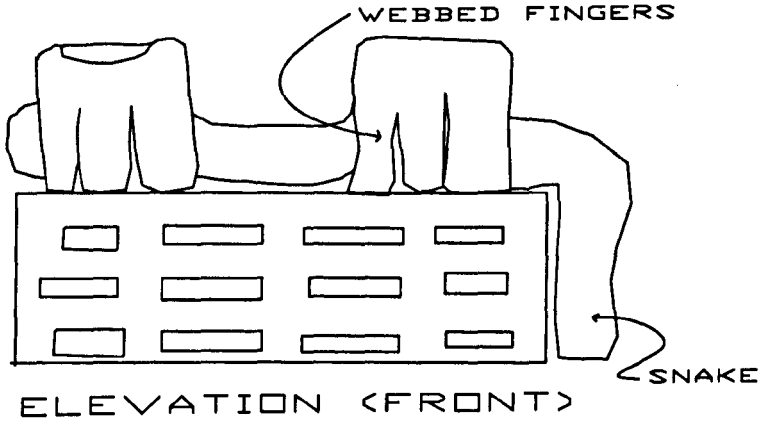
GARUDA CAPITAL
GWALIOR MUSEUM VIEW 2

13

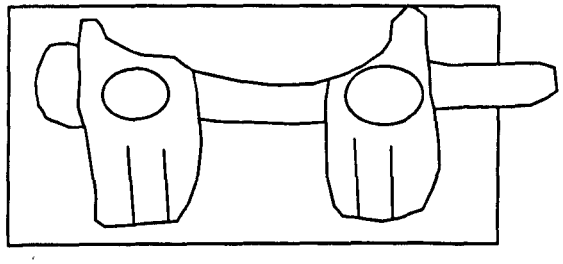
PHOTO NO.



ELEVATION (SIDE)



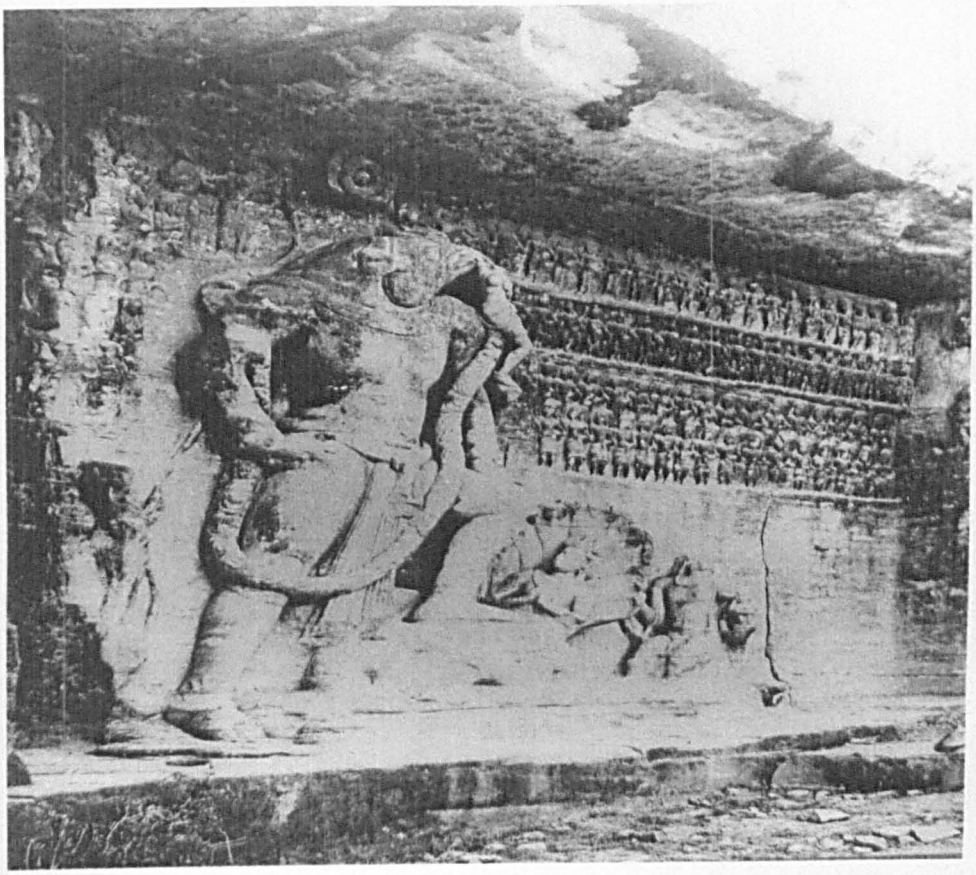
ELEVATION (FRONT)



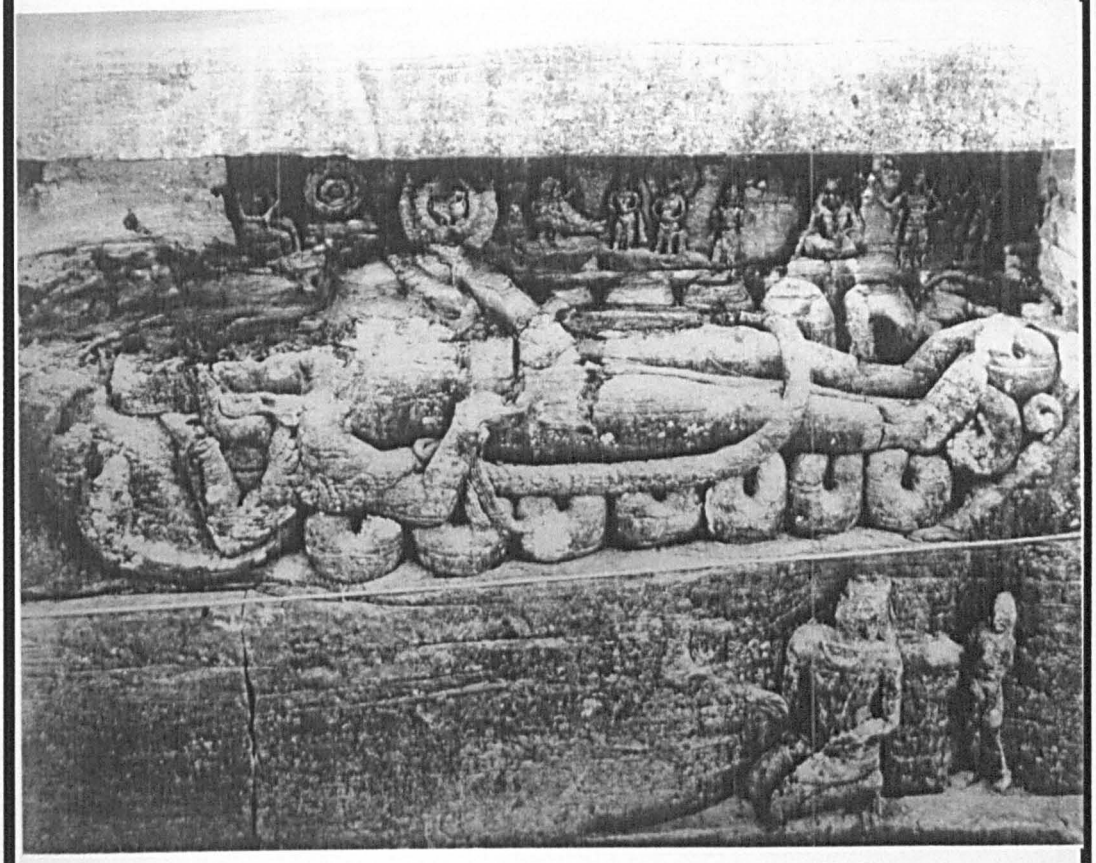
PLAN

GARUDA CAPITAL

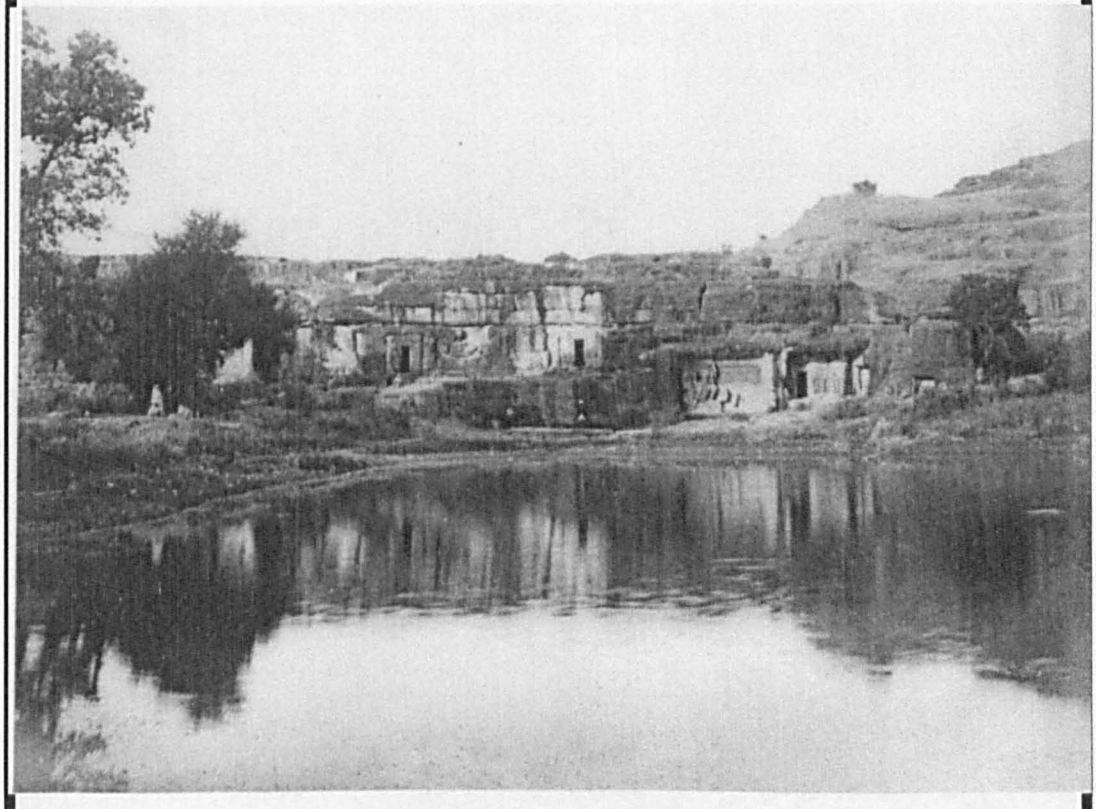
UDAYAGIRI	**14**
GARUDA CAPITAL : A SKETCH	PHOTO NO.



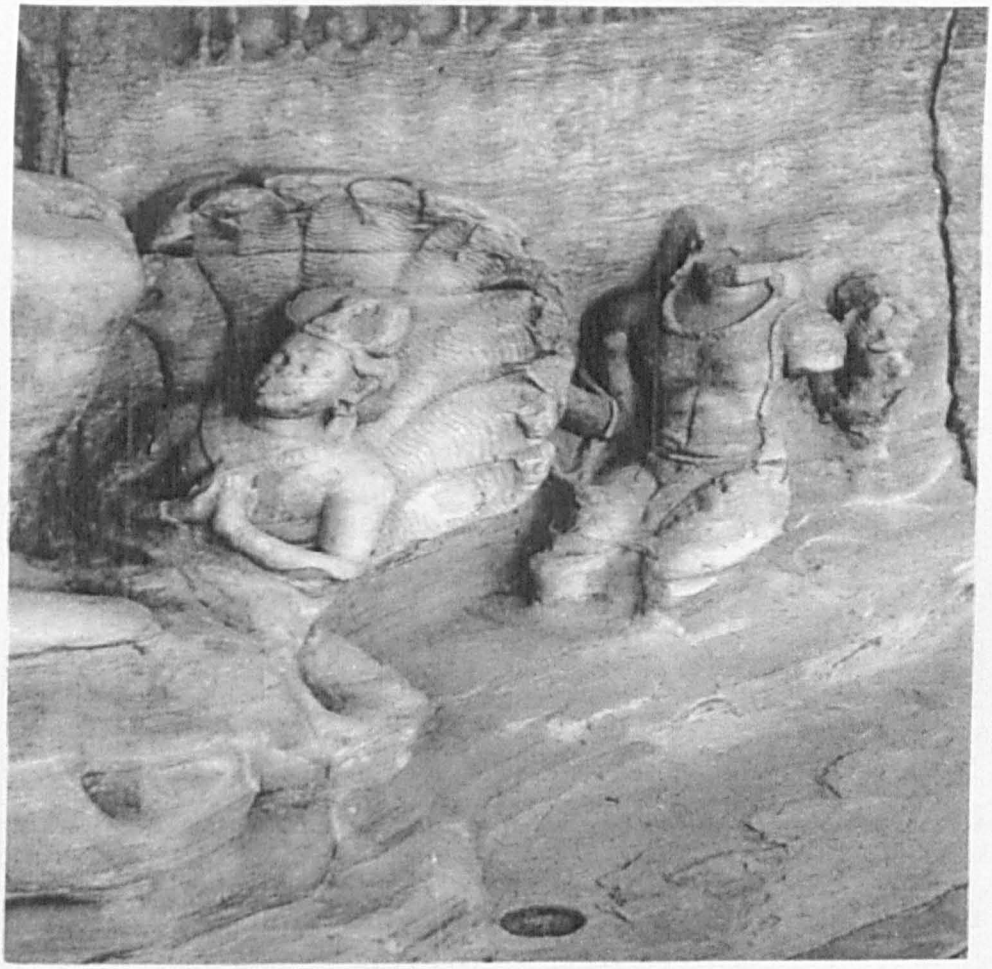
UDAYAGIRI	15
VARAHA PANEL -1914	PHOTO NO.



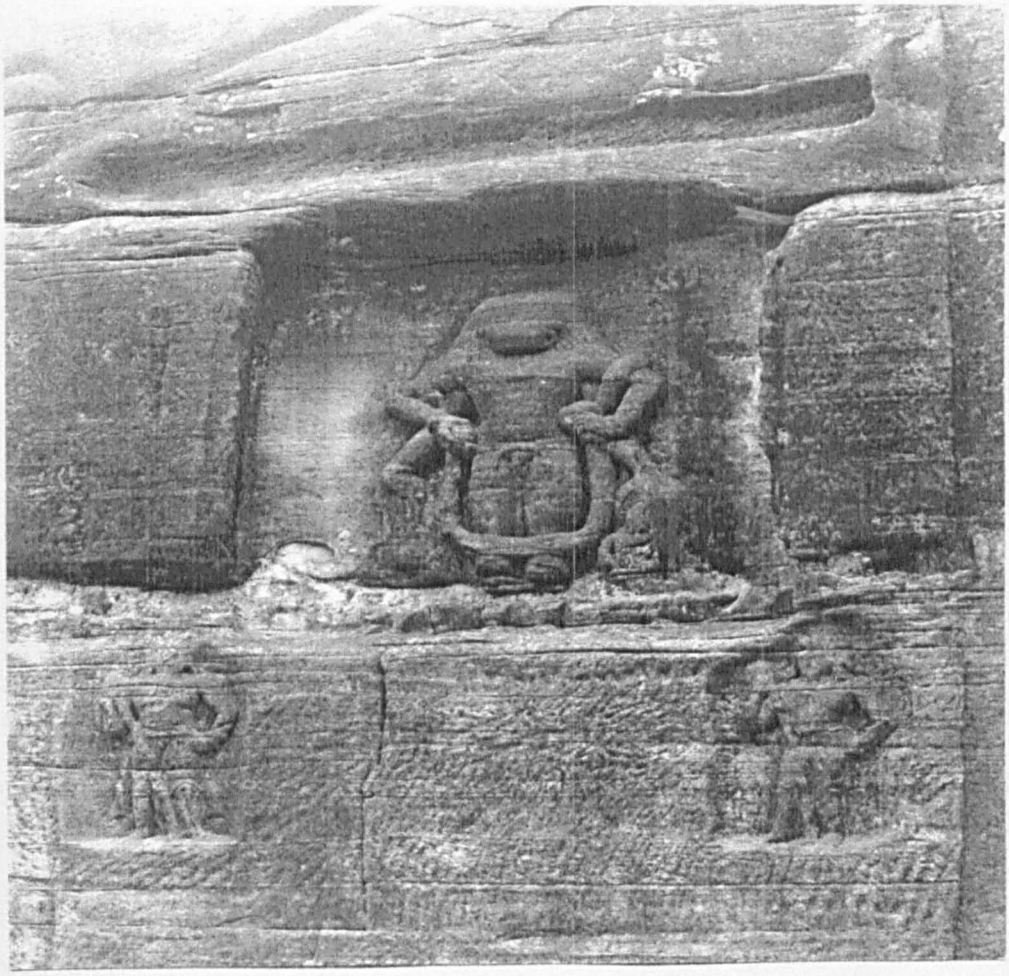
UDAYAGIRI	16
VISHNU - ANANTASAYANA	PHOTO NO.



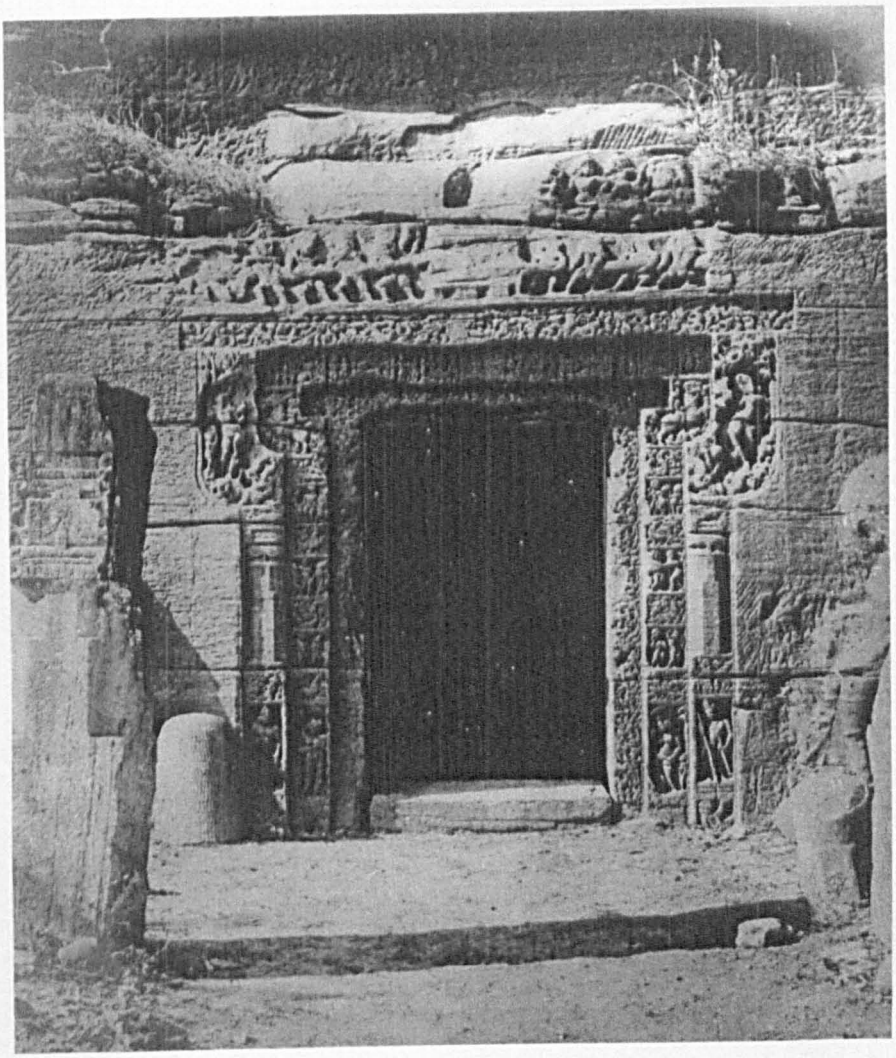
UDAYAGIRI	17
FRONT VIEW OF CAVE COMPLEX IN 1914	PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI	18
CANDRAGUPTA AND VERASENA WITH NAGA IN VARAHA PANEL	PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI	19
NARASIMHA CAVE 12	PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI

SAHASTRALINGA IN FRONT OF CAVE 19.
1914

20

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

ASI PHOTO (1914) MUKHALINGA FROM NORTHERN HILLTOP
CURRENT LOCATION NOT KNOWN

21

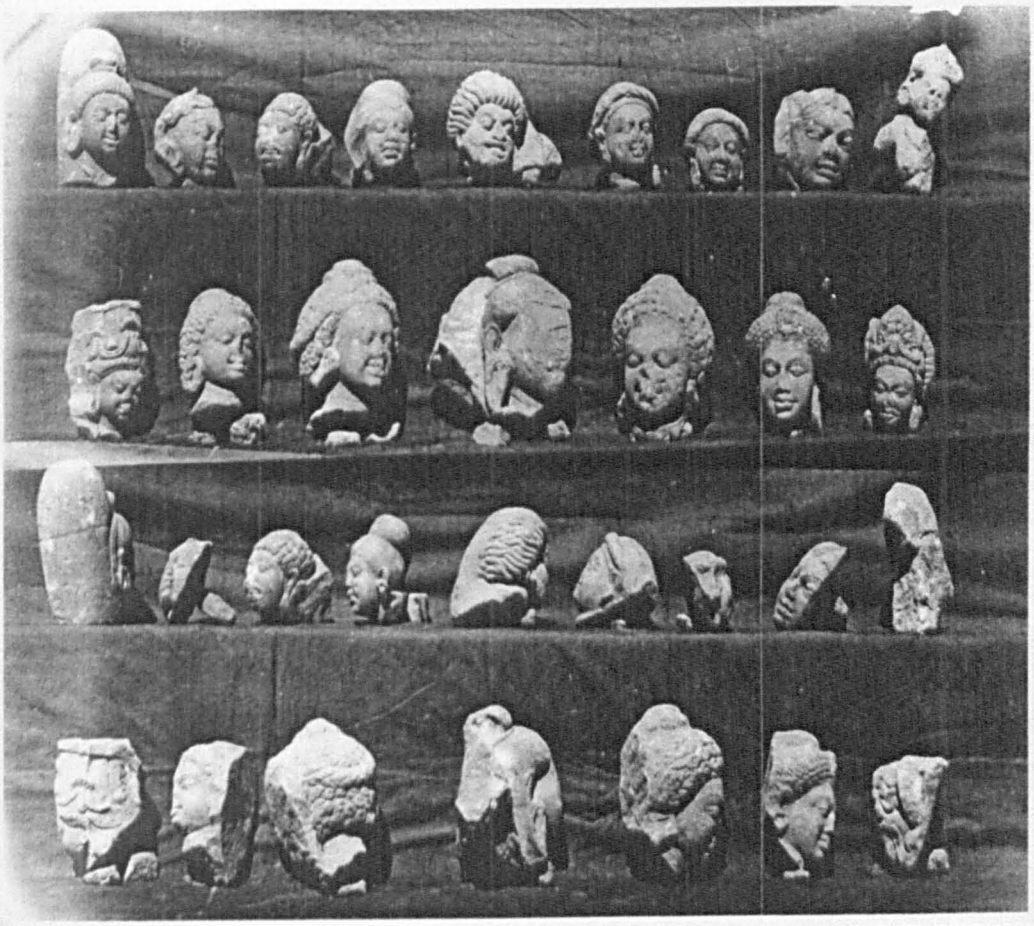
PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

MATRIKA FROM BESNAGAR
NOW IN NATION MUSEUM DELHI

22

PHOTO NO.



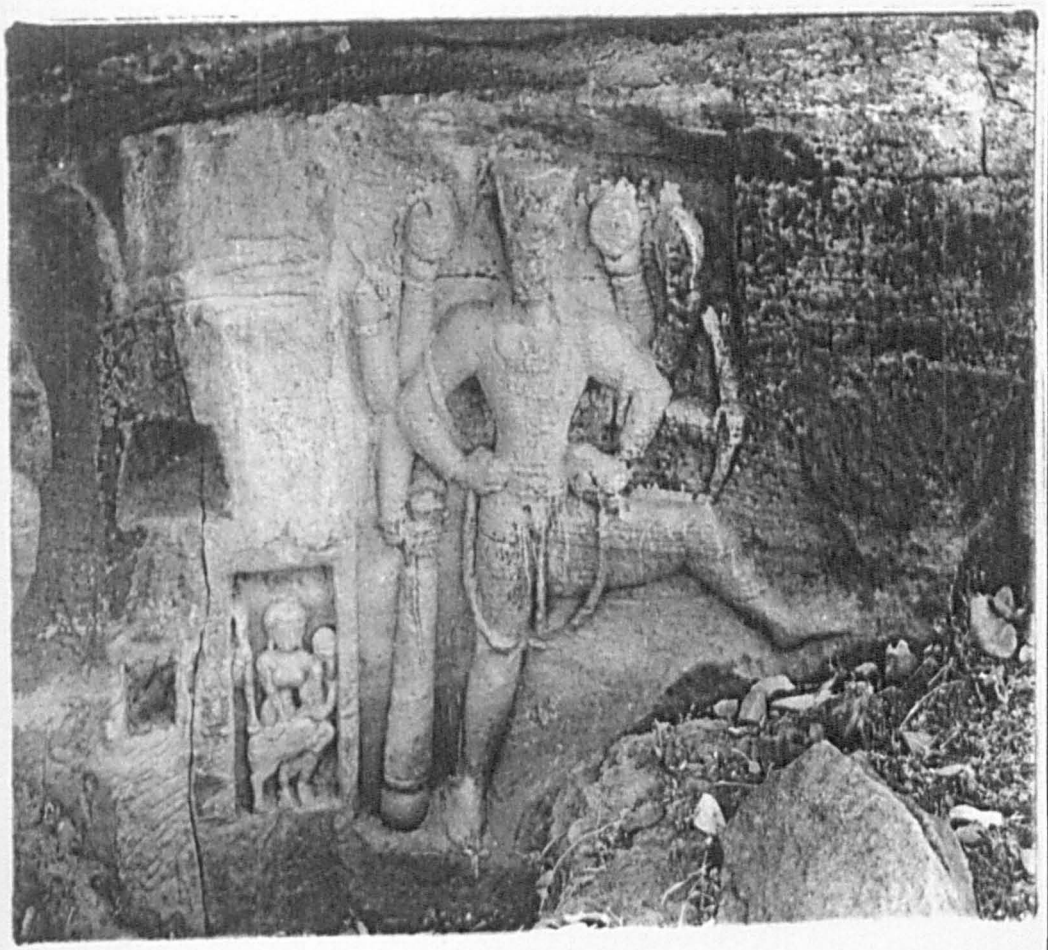
UDAYAGIRI

ASI PHOTO (1914) HEADS FROM NORTHERN HILLTOP
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

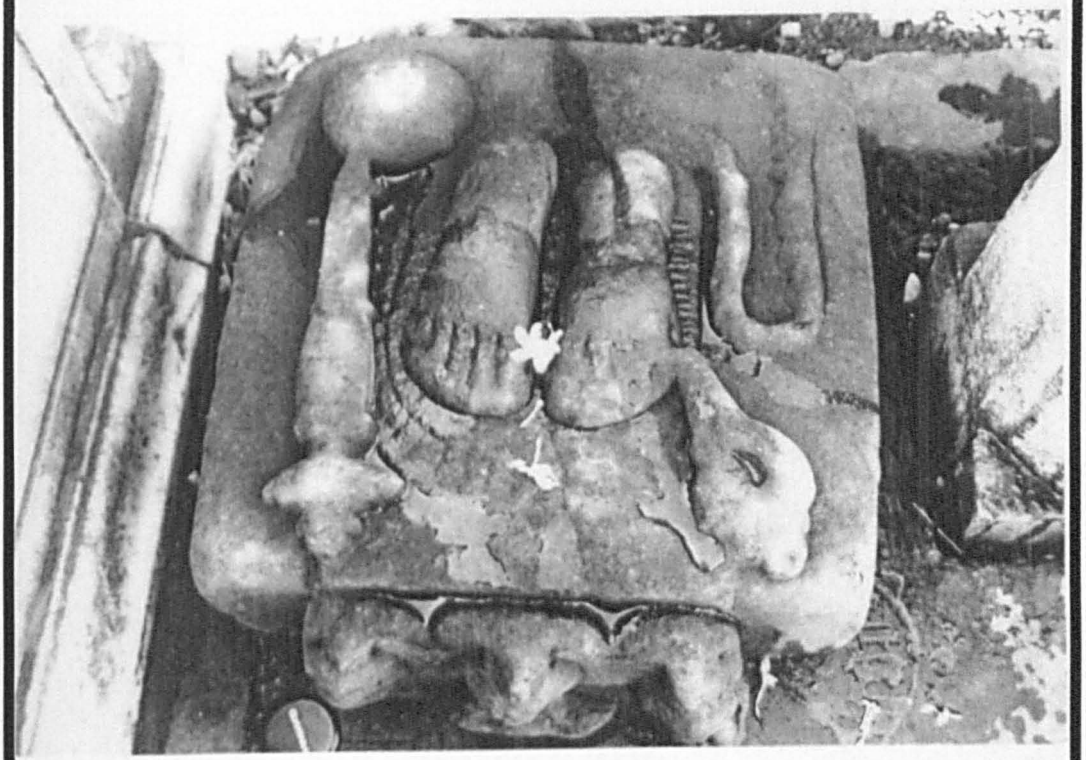
23

PHOTO NO.

MEHRAULI DELHI	24
IRON PILLAR	PHOTO NO.



PARSORA IN VIDISHA DISTRICT	25
TRIVIKRAMA CARVED ON THE HILL FACE	PHOTO NO.



CHARANTIRTH : BESNAGAR	26
CHARAN WORSHIP	PHOTO NO.

CHARANTIRTH: BESNAGAR	27
LATE GUPTA COLUMN EMBEDDED IN THE GHATS	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI	28
BRICK WITH CARANA - UDAYAGIRI	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

STUMP OF THE PILLAR AT NORTHERN HILL TOP
STUDY OF SHADOW

29

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

FOUR LION CAPITAL -
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

30

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI	31
ADITYAS FROM FOUR LION CAPITAL	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

ASI PHOTO (1914) OF NAKSHATRA CAKRA
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

32

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

DETAIL OF NAKSHATRA CAKRA: MOTHER ON BIRD
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

33

PHOTO NO.

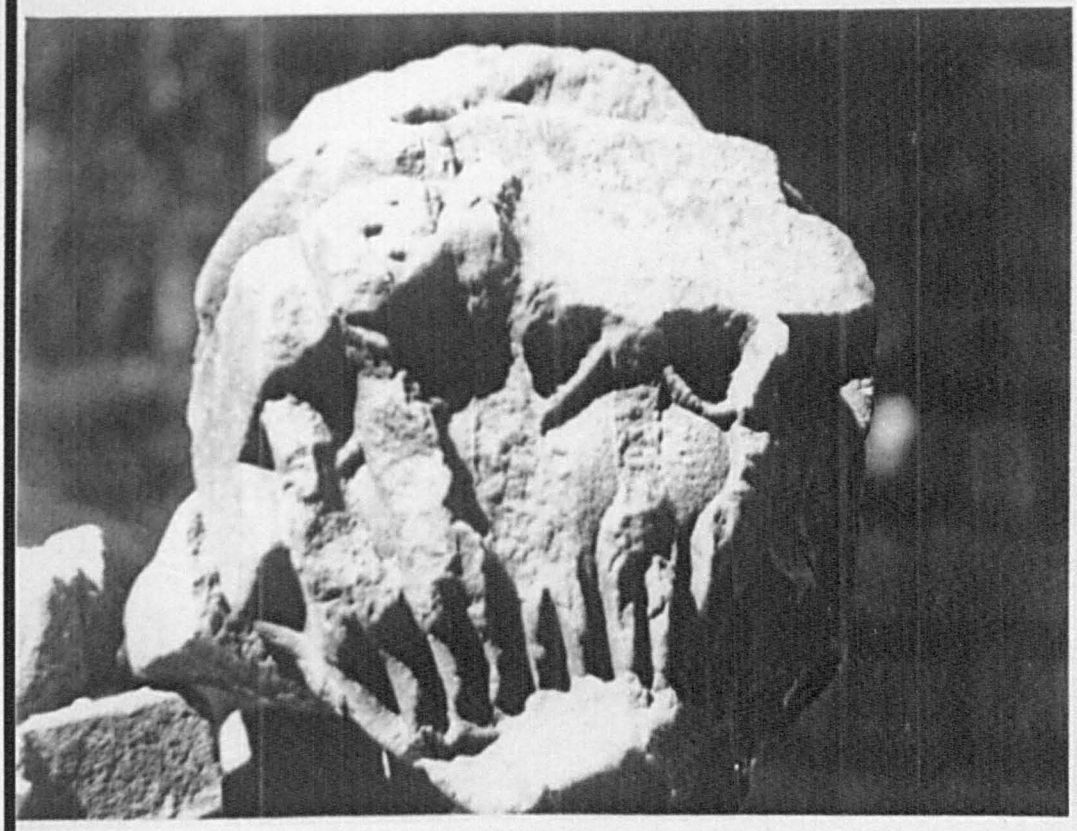
BESNAGAR

CONICAL JEWELLERY ON THE HEAD OF MATRIKA
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

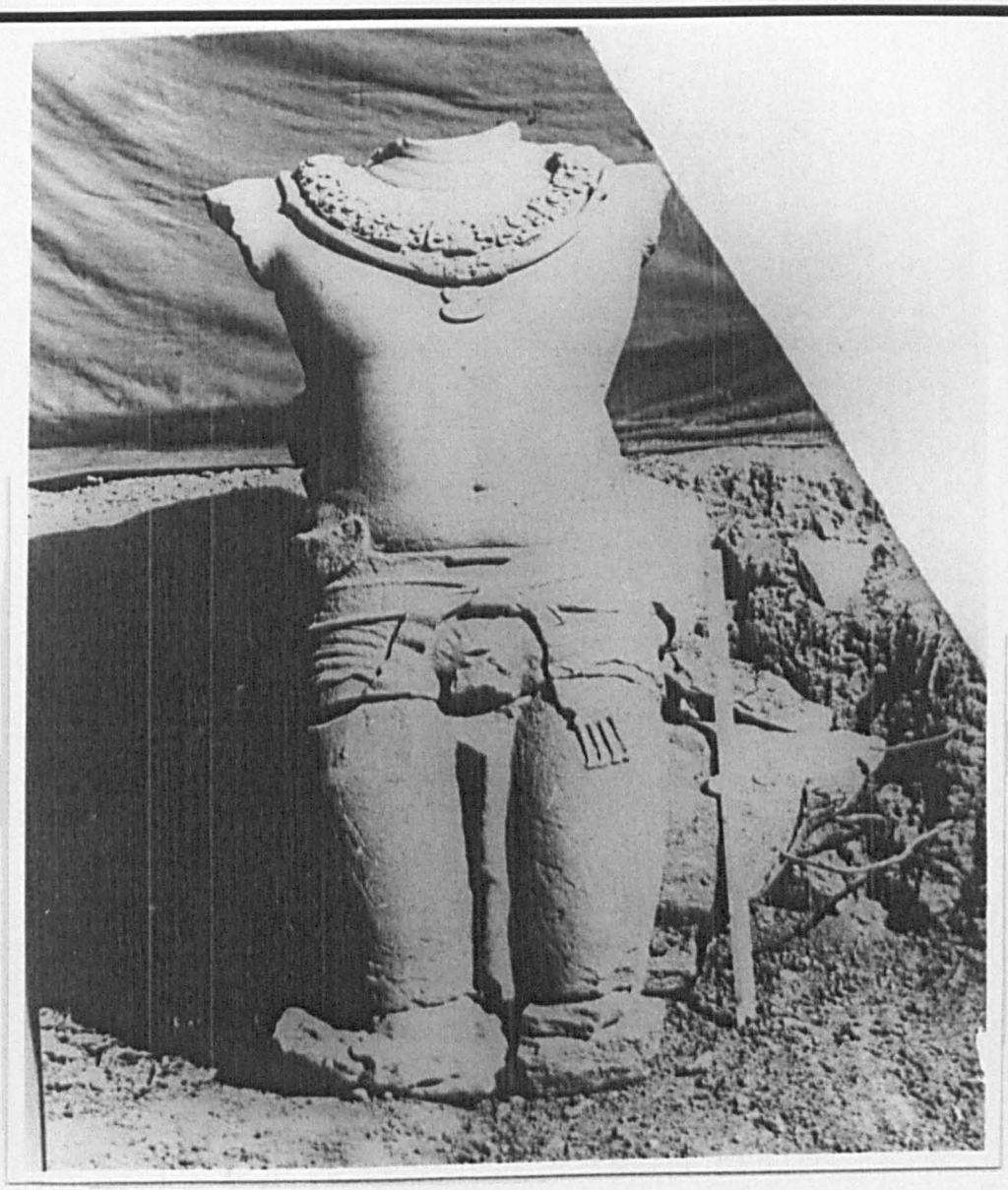
34

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI	35
NISHANA YATRA	PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI	36
SURYA LINTEL FRAGMENT	PHOTO NO.

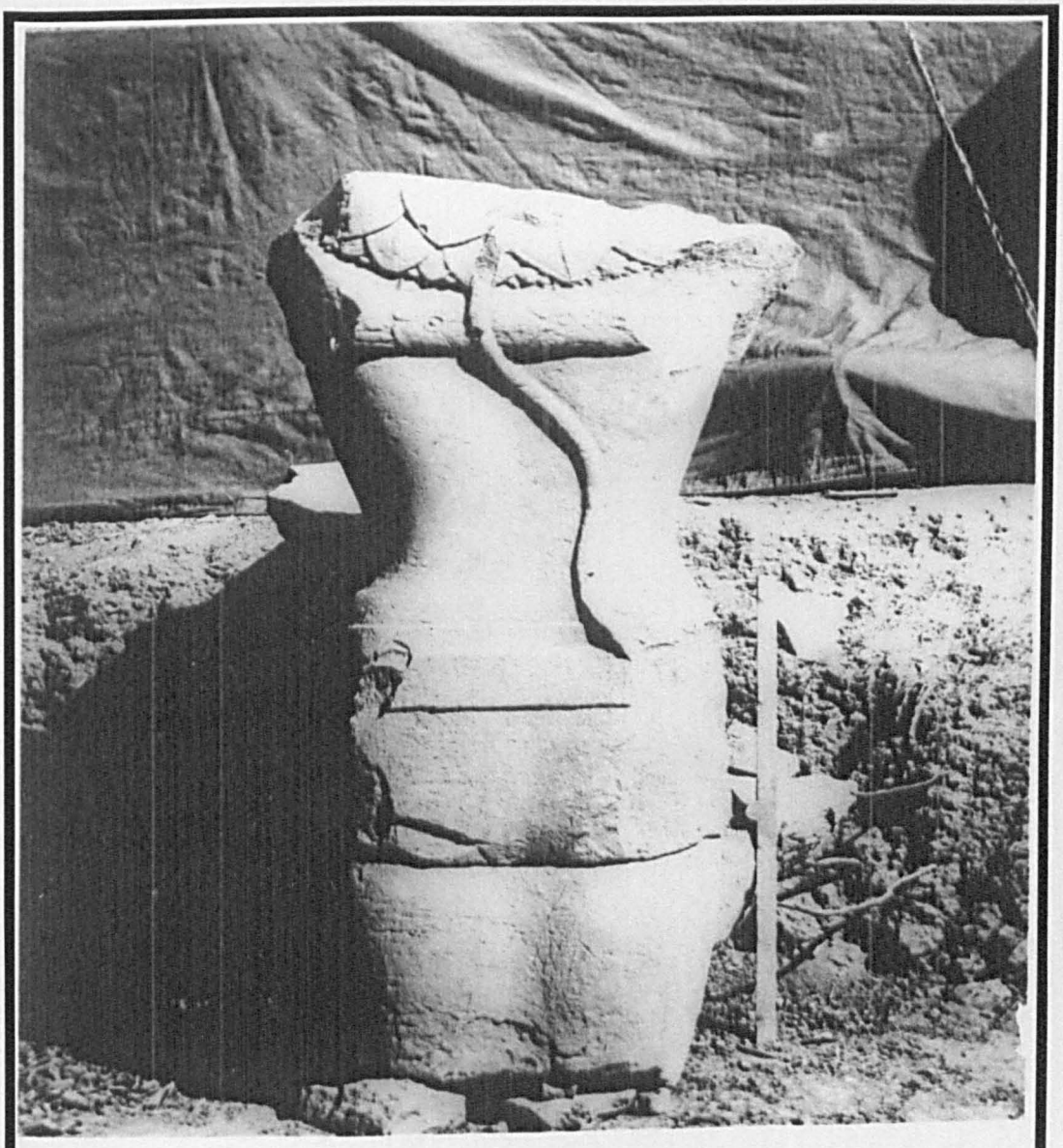


UDAYAGIRI

37

ASI PHOTO (1914) TORSO FROM NORTHERN HILLTOP -
NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM. (FRONT VIEW)

PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI

ASI PHOTO (1914) TORSO FROM NORTHERN HILL TOP - NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM. (BACK VIEW)

38

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

39

PHOTO NO.

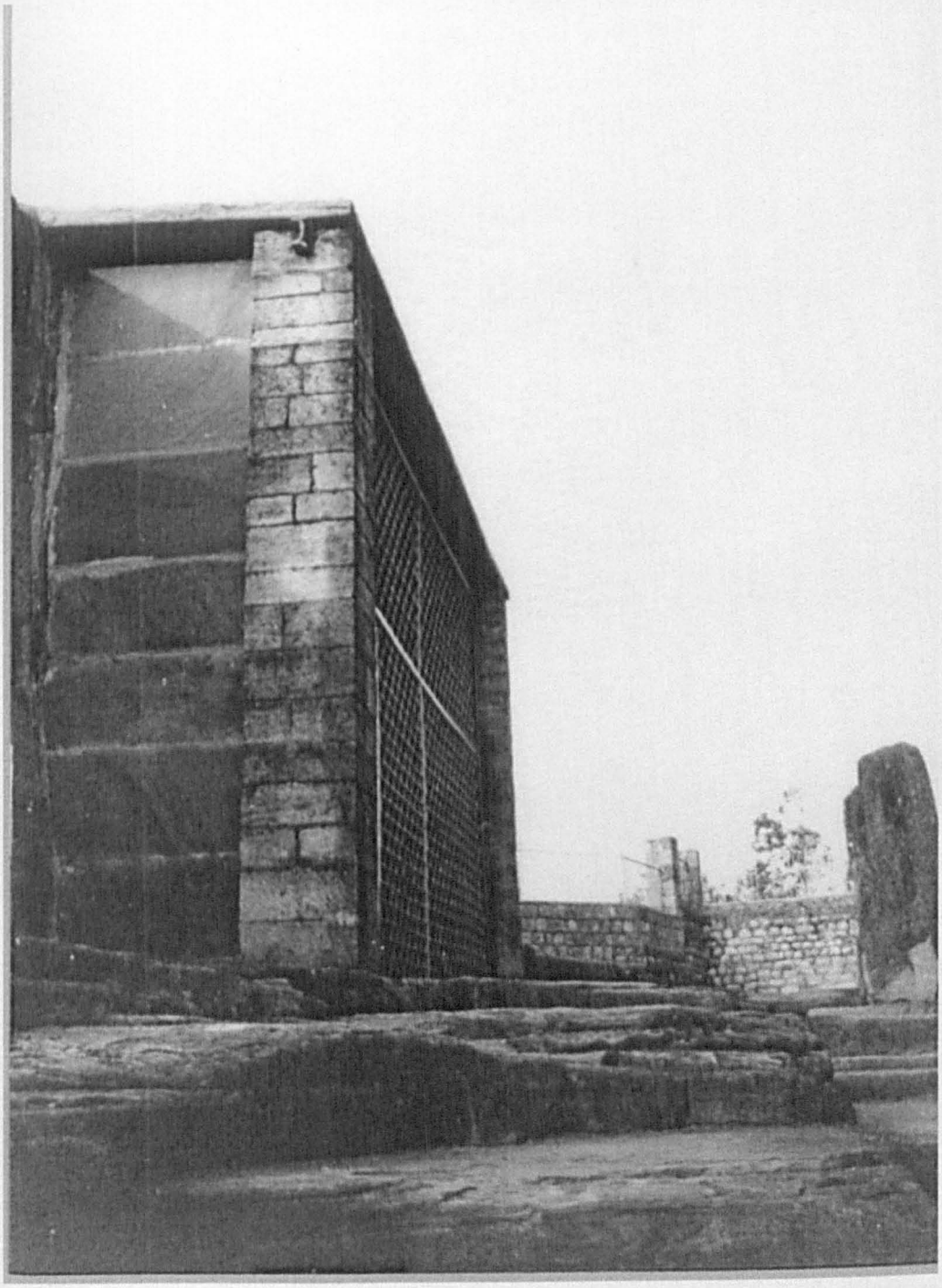
ELEPHANT PATH TO THE NORTHERN HILL TOP.

UDAYAGIRI

COLUMN FROM UDAYAGIRI NOW AT GWALIOR MUSEUM

40

PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI

SOLSTICE DAY SHADOW ON ANANTASAYANA ENCLOSURE

41

PHOTO NO.

BASARH (ANCIENT VAISHALI)	42
A SEAL WITH LEGEND VISHNUPADA ASI PHOTO (AR 1903-4, PL. XL.).	PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

CANDRAGUPTA II AND VERSENA IN VARAHA PANEL

43

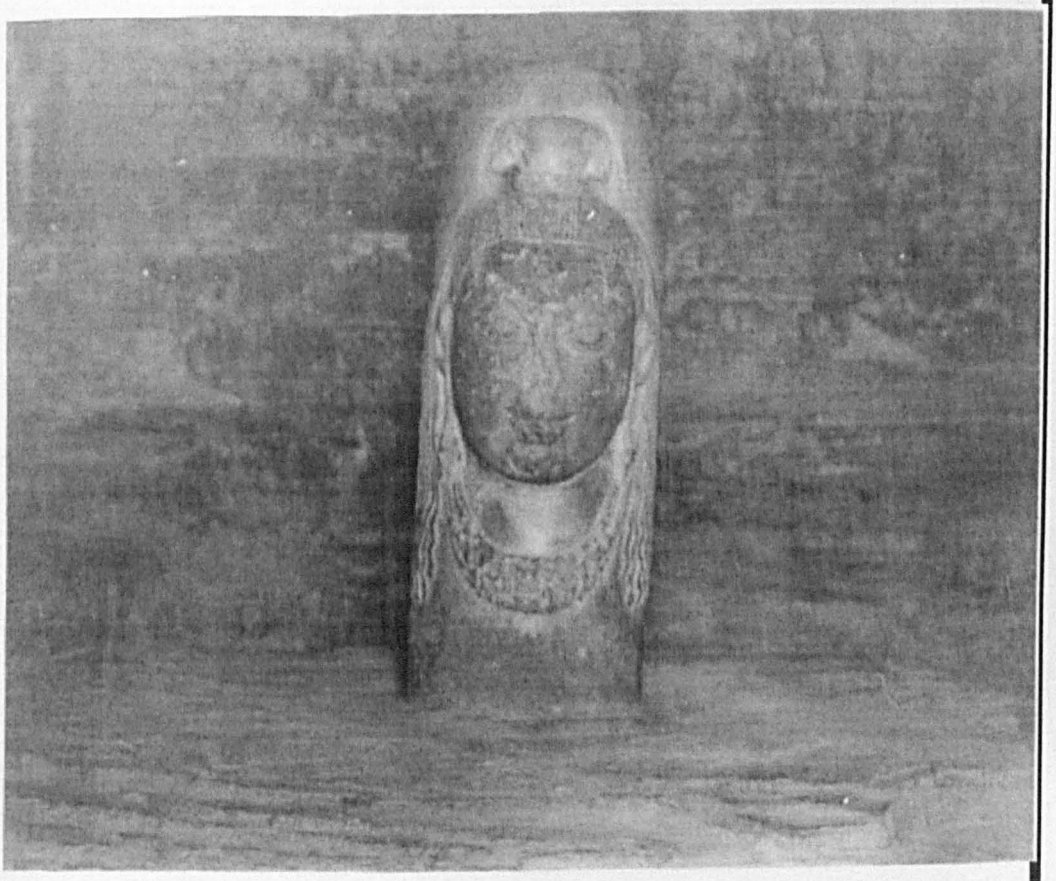
PHOTO NO.

BESNAGAR

PROBABLY FROM UDAYAGIRI GANGA
CURRENTLY ON BESNAGAR MOUND

44

PHOTO NO.



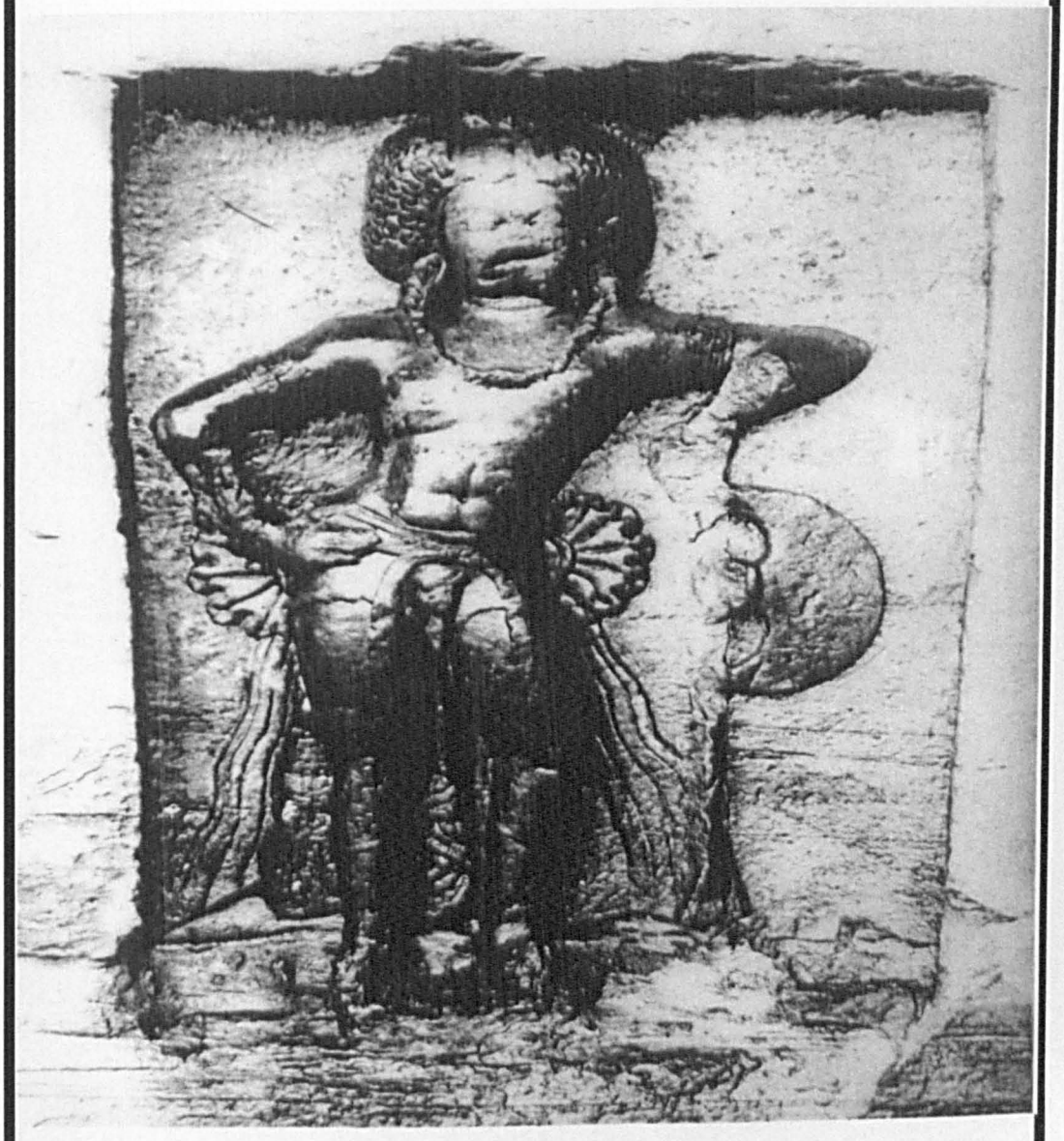
UDAYAGIRI

MUKHALINGA CAVE 4

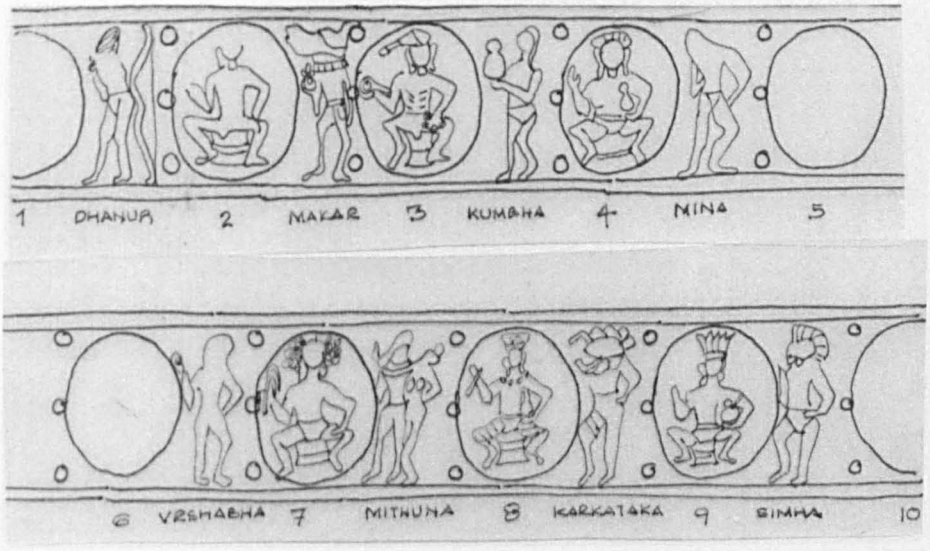
45

PHOTO NO.

RAMGHAT: RIVER BETWA	46
MUKHALINGA CURRENTLY AT RAMGHAT	PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI	47
DVARAPALA CAVE 6	PHOTO NO.

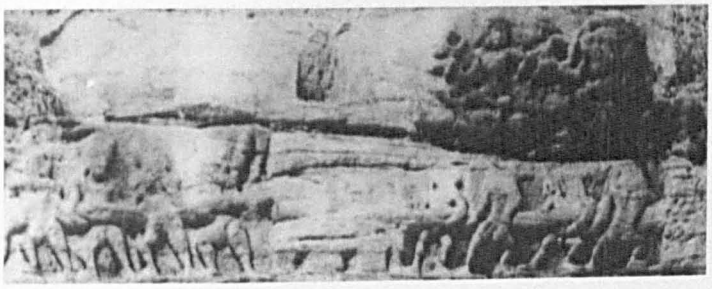


UDAYAGIRI

48

FOUR LION CAPITAL CURRENTLY AT GWALIOR MUSEUM:
ABACUS SHOWING ADITYAS AND RASIS

PHOTO NO.

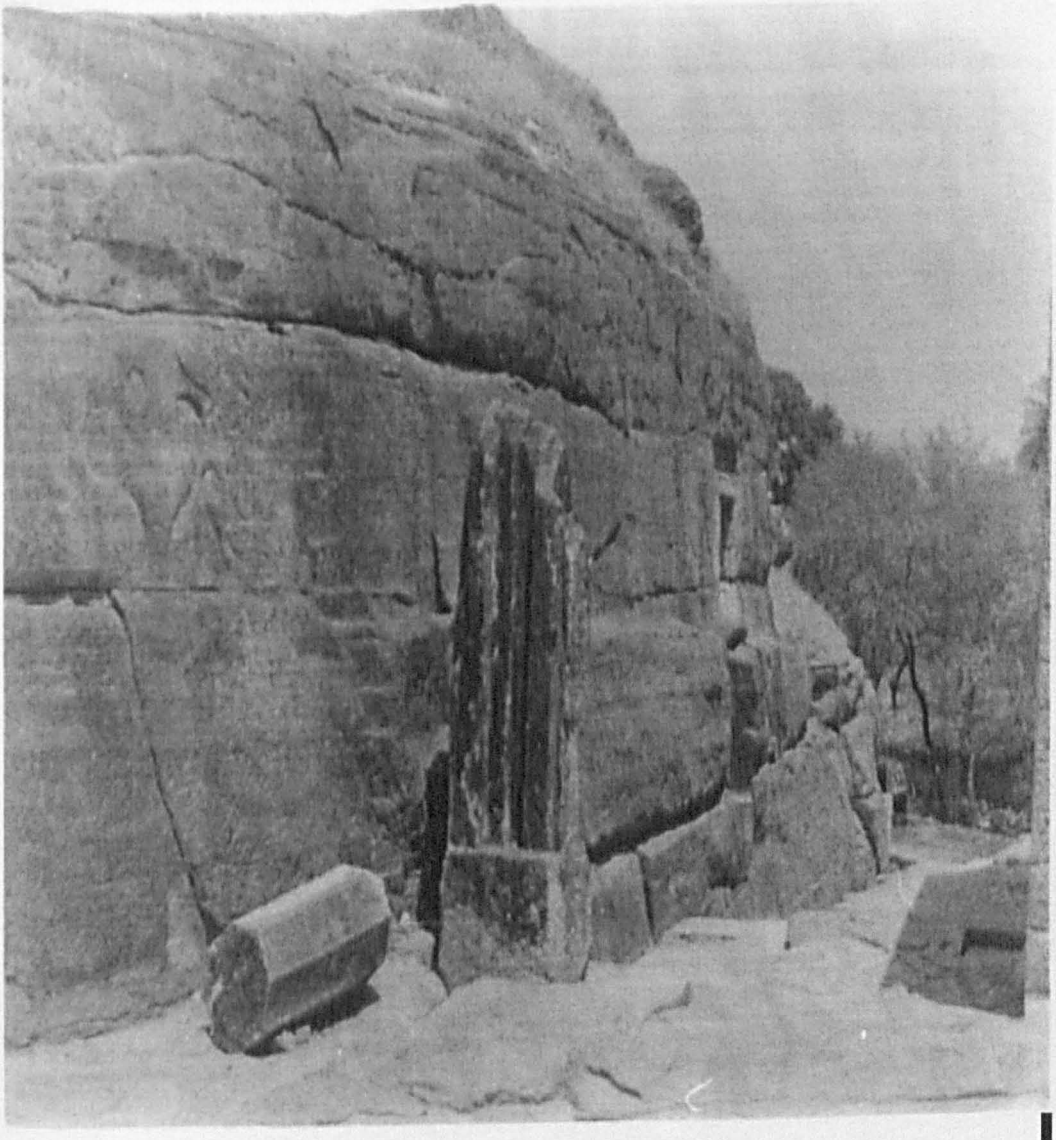


UDAYAGIRI

LINTEL CAVE 19 SHOWING Cchurning OF OCEAN

49

PHOTO NO.

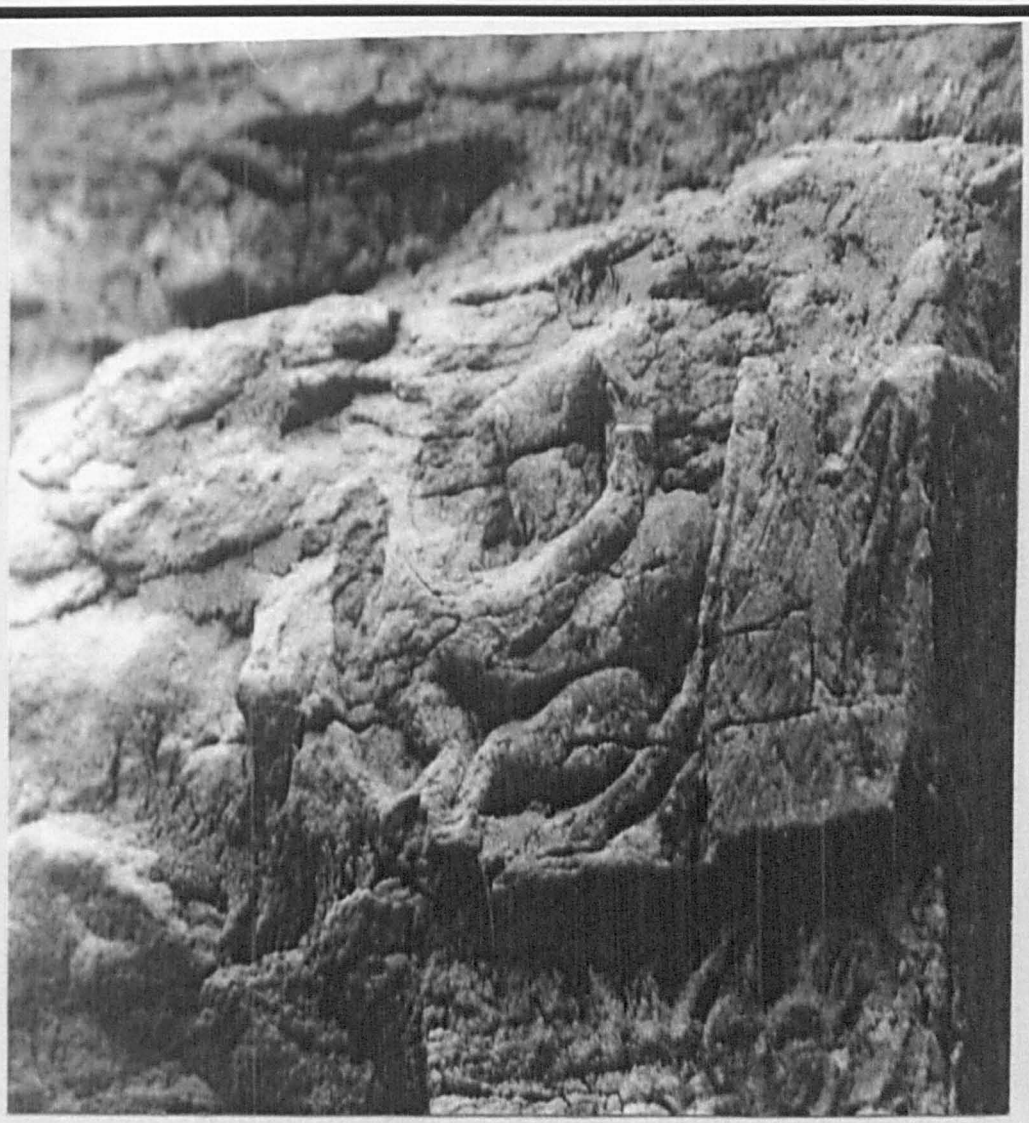


UDAYAGIRI

NORTHEN WALL OF PASSAGE: SHOWING COLUMN SHAFT, LINTEL AND NICHE FOR GODDESS

50

PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI

LINTEL CAVE 4: HARP (VINA) PLAYER

51

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

52

ASI PHOTO (1913): CAVE 19 SHOWING TWO COLUMNS IN FRONT. ONLY ONE EXISTS TODAY.

PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

53

ASI PHOTO (1914) EXCAVATION OF GUPTA PERIOD TEMPLE ON THE NORTHERN HILLTOP

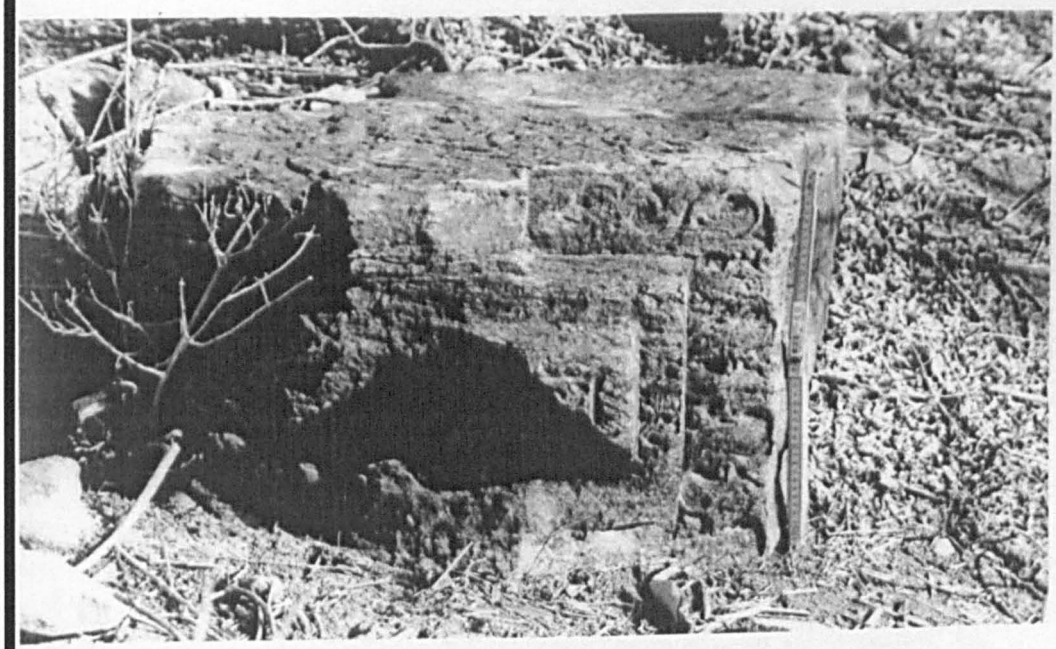
PHOTO NO.

UDAYAGIRI

54

GUPTA PERIOD TEMPLE NORTHERN HILLTOP:
FRAGMENT FG-02 (DOOR JAMB)

PHOTO NO.

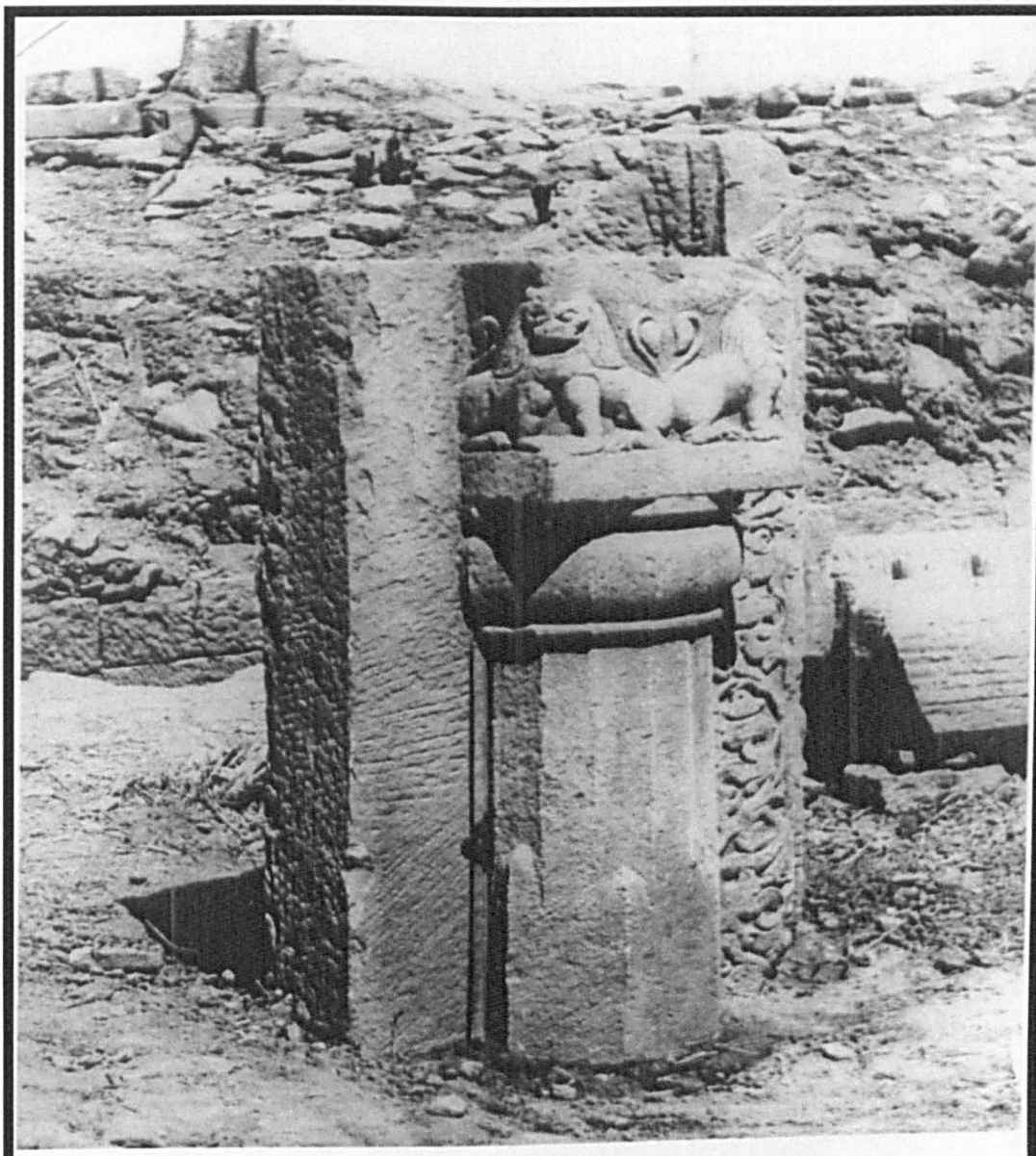


UDAYAGIRI

55

GUPTA PERIOD TEMPLE NORTHERN HILLTOP:
FRAGMENT OF SLAB

PHOTO NO.



UDAYAGIRI

56

GUPTA PERIOD TEMPLE NORTHERN HILL:
PILASTER WITH TWO LION CAPITAL

PHOTO NO.

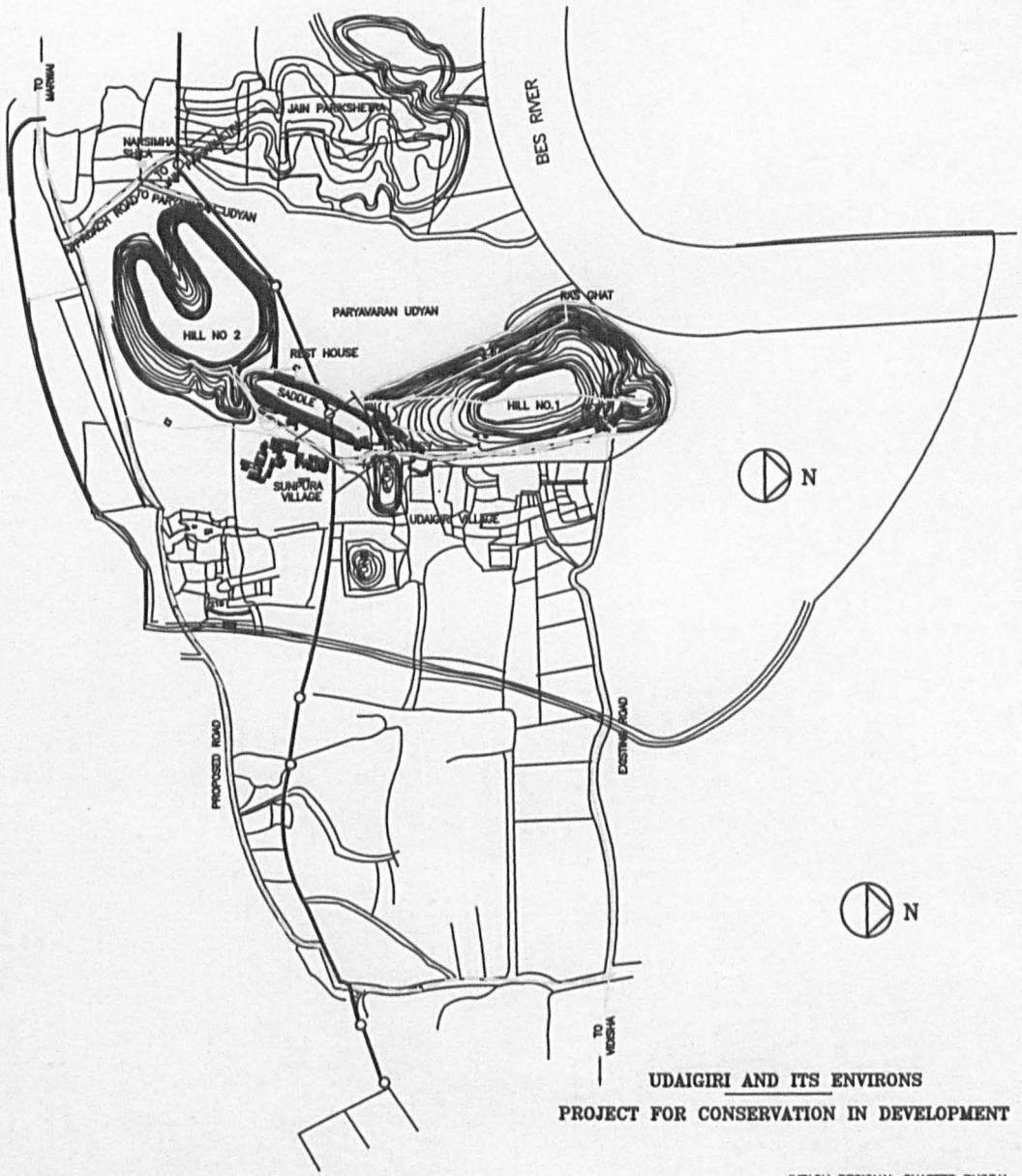
UDAYAGIRI	57
ASI PHOTO (1914) VISHNU: PARAMARA PERIOD	PHOTO NO.

VIDISHA REGION

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

N

DATA NO. 01

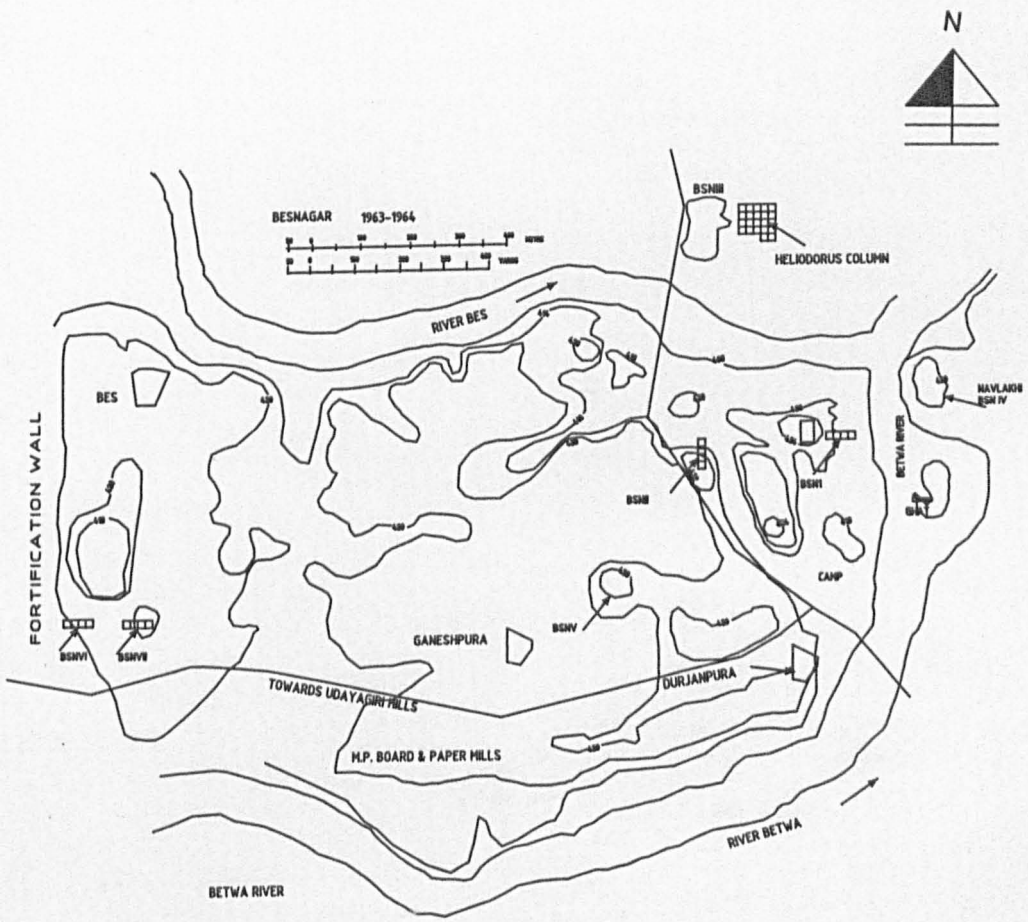


UDAIGIRI AND ITS ENVIRONS

PROJECT FOR CONSERVATION IN DEVELOPMENT

INTACH REGIONAL CHAPTER BHOPAL

MANAGEMENT PLAN UDAYAGIRI	02
UDAYAGIRI HILLS 5TH CENTURY SITE	MAP NO.

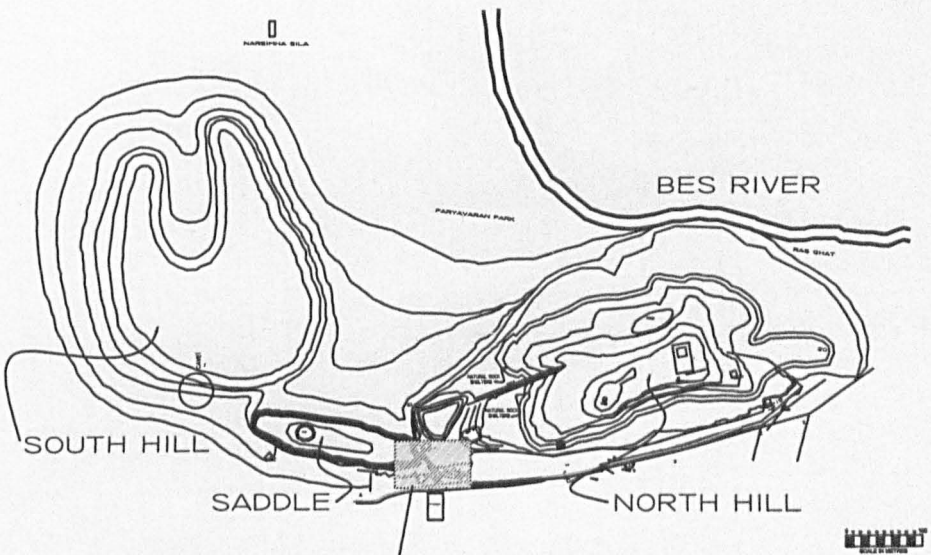


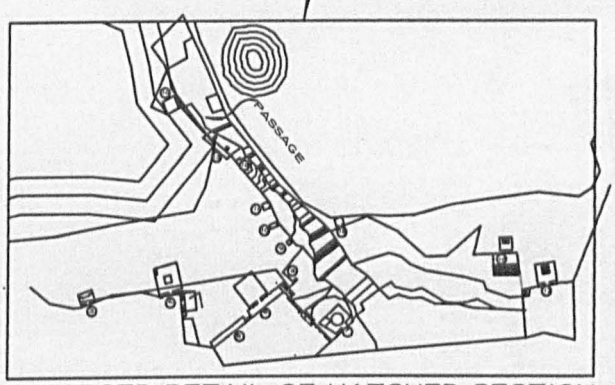
BESNAGAR EXCAVATION PLAN (1974)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

03

MAP NO.





ENLARGED DETAIL OF HATCHED SECTION
(REFER MAP 05)

BETWA RIVER

OPENING DETAILS OF CAVES

S.NO.	CAVE NO.	FACT SHEET NO.
1.	NO.1	FS-CV-01
2.	NO.2	FS-CV-02
3.	NO.3	FS-CV-03
4.	NO.4	FS-CV-04
5.	NO.5	FS-CV-05&06
6.	NO.6	FS-CV-05&06
7.	NO.7	FS-PASSAGE
8.	NO.8	FS-PASSAGE
9.	NO.9	FS-PASSAGE
10.	NO.10	FS-PASSAGE
11.	NO.11	FS-PASSAGE
12.	NO.12	FS-PASSAGE
13.	NO.13	FS-PASSAGE
14.	NO.14	FS-PASSAGE
15.	NO.15	FS-CV-15
16.	NO.16	FS-CV-16
17.	NO.17	FS-CV-17
18.	NO.18	FS-CV-18
18 (B)	NO.18B	FS-CV-18B
19.	NO.19	FS-CV-19
20.	NO.20	FS-CV-20

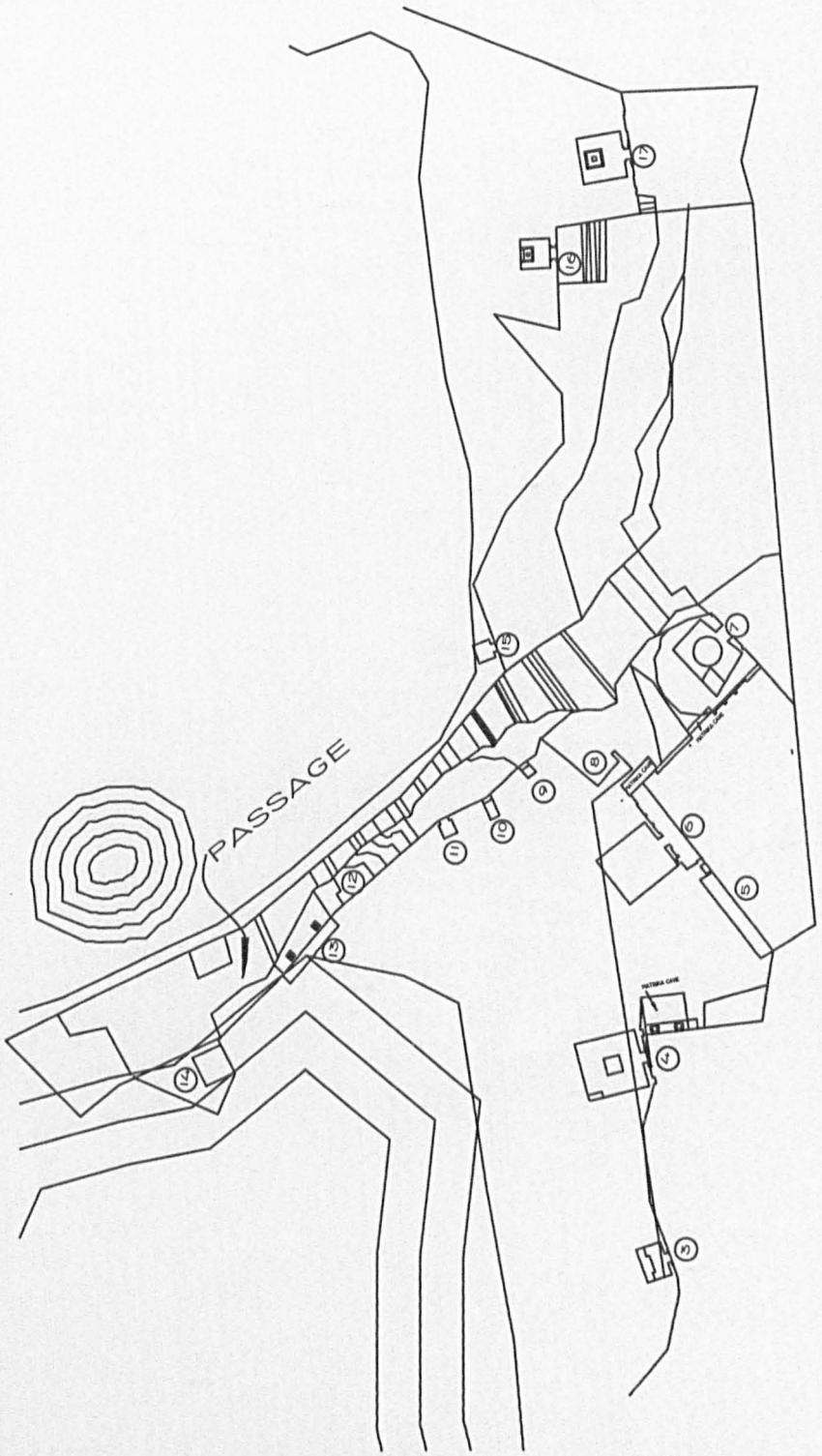
LOCATION OF CAVES-KEY PLAN

UDAYAGIRI HILLS 5TH CENTURY SITE

N

04

MAP NO.



CAVES AROUND PASSAGE

SCALE IN METRES

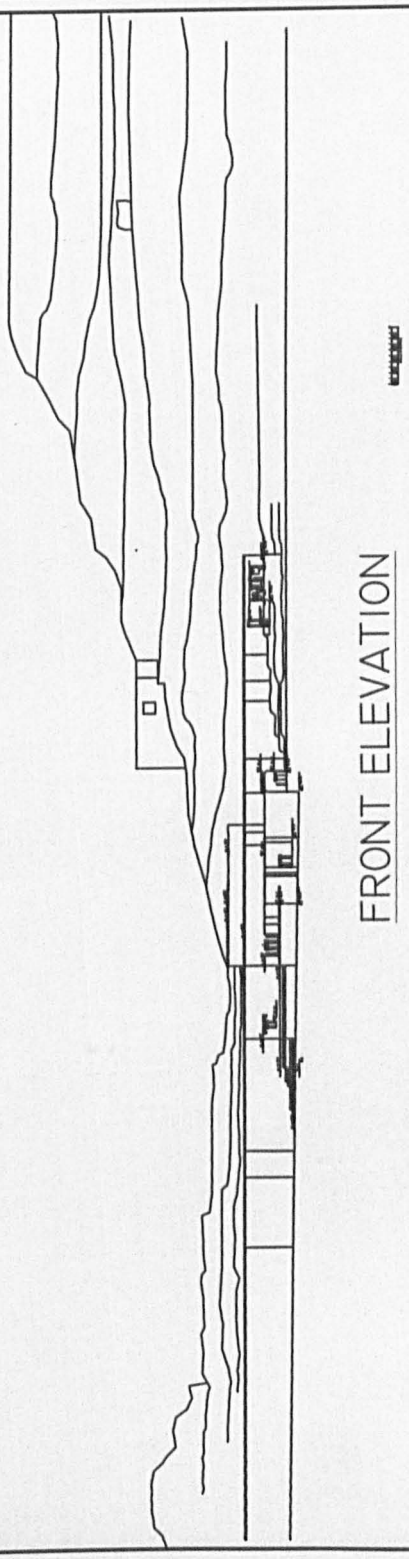
LOCATION OF CAVE - PASSAGE

UDAYAGIRI HILLS 5TH CENTURY SITE

N

05

MAP NO.

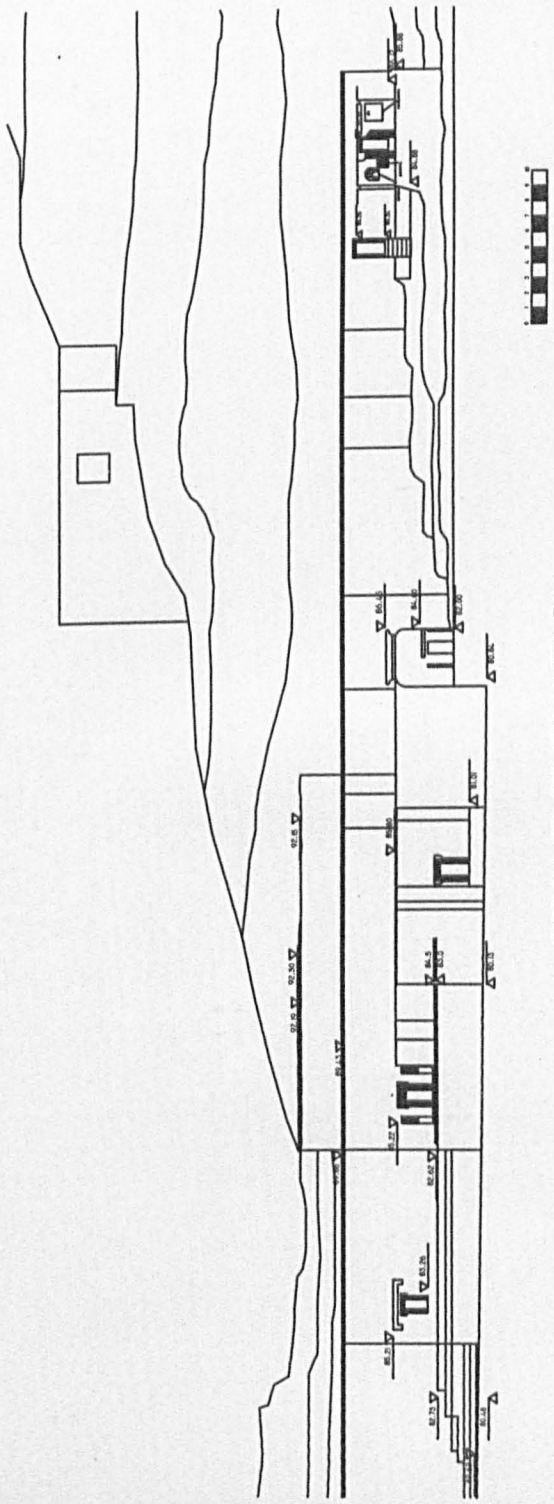


FRONT ELEVATION(a)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

06

MAP NO.



FRONT ELEVATION

FRONT ELEVATION(b)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

07

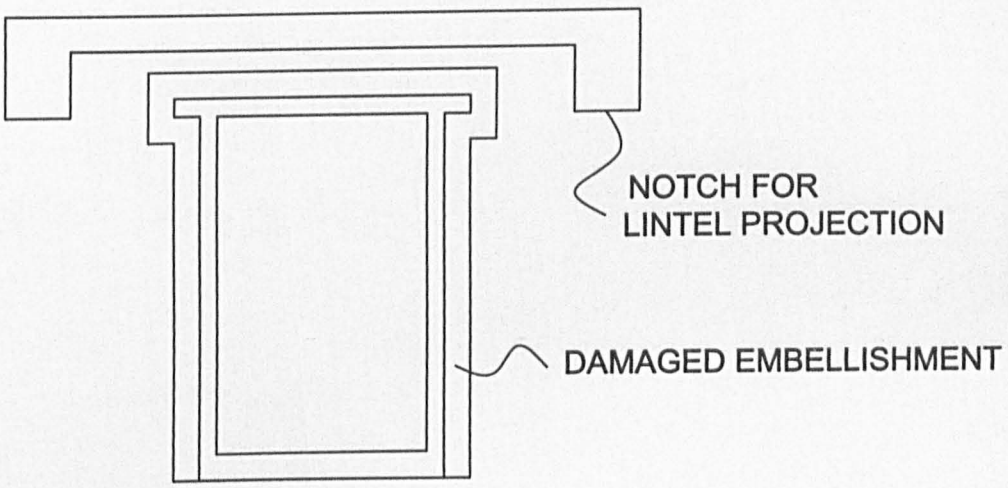
MAP NO.

SECTION THROUGH PASSAGE

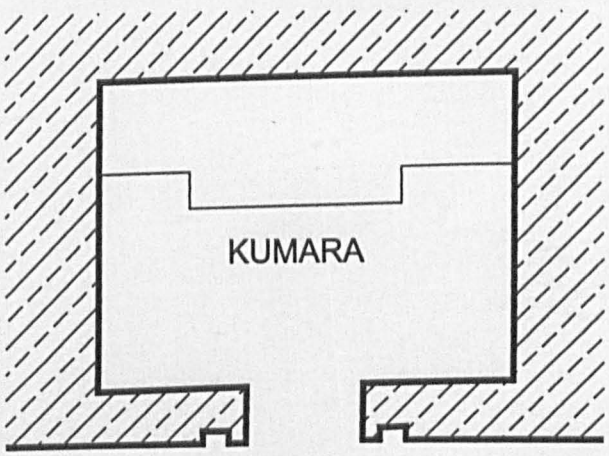
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

08

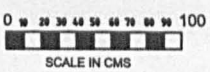
MAP NO.



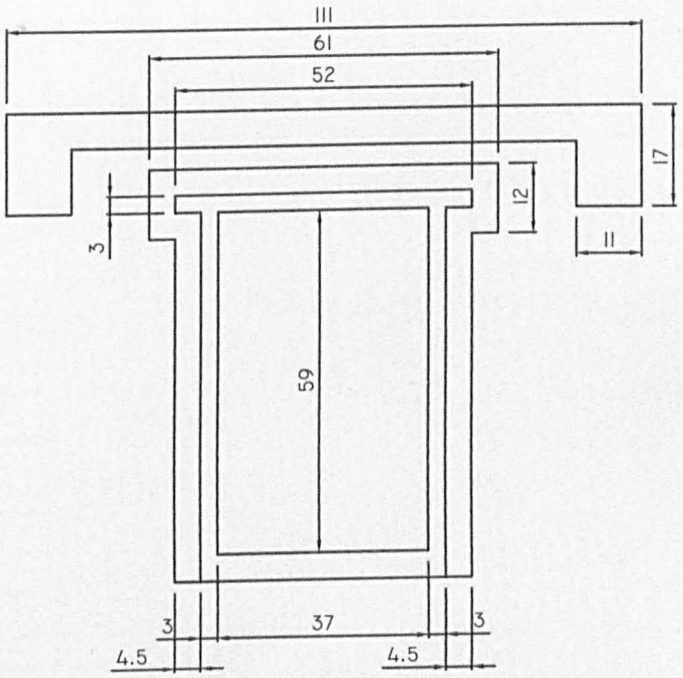
ELEVATION



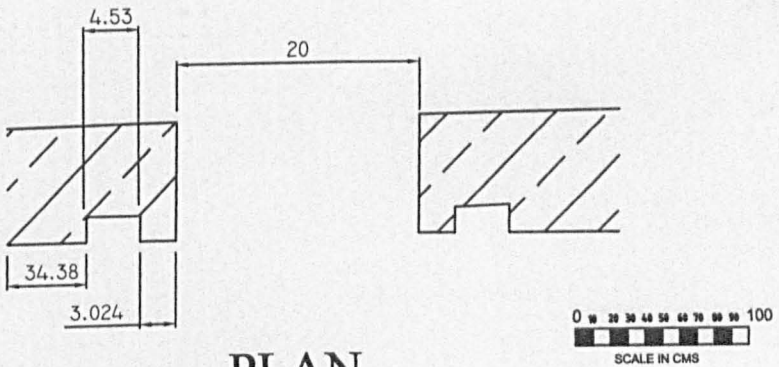
PLAN



CAVE 3 PLAN AND ELEVATION	N	09
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES		MAP NO.

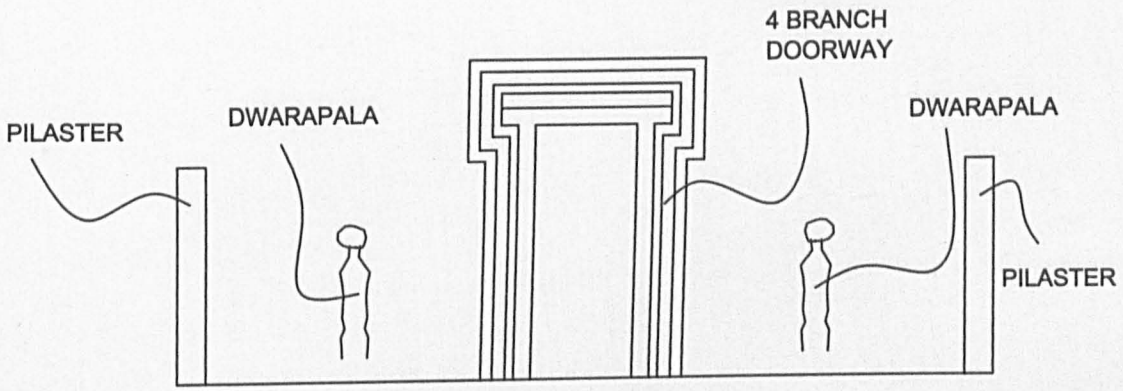


ELEVATION

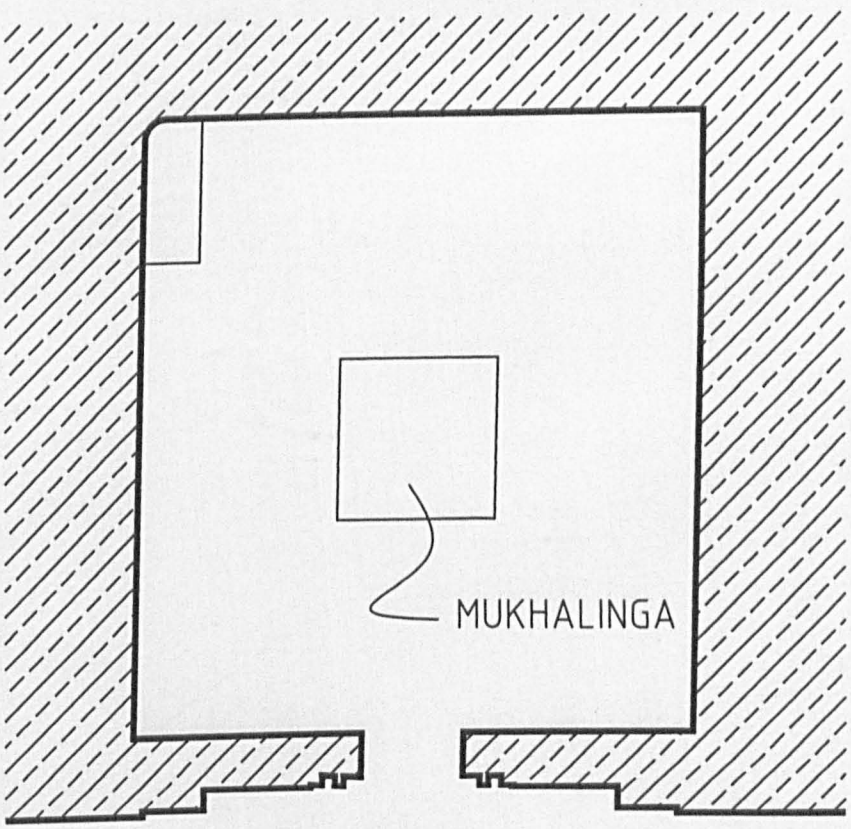


PLAN

CAVE 3 : DIMENSIONS	N	10
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES		MAP NO.



ELEVATION



PLAN

SCALE IN CMS

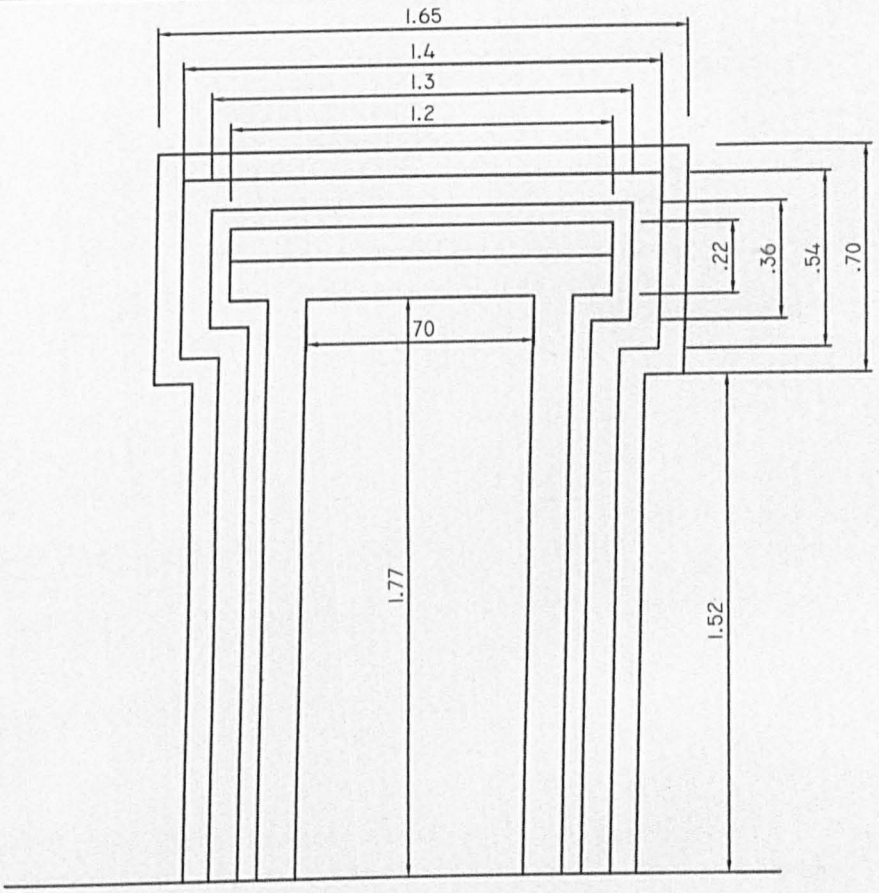
CAVE 4 : PLAN AND ELEVATION

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

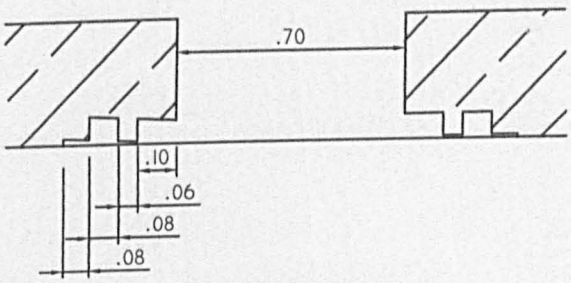
N

11

MAP NO.

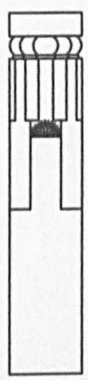


ELEVATION

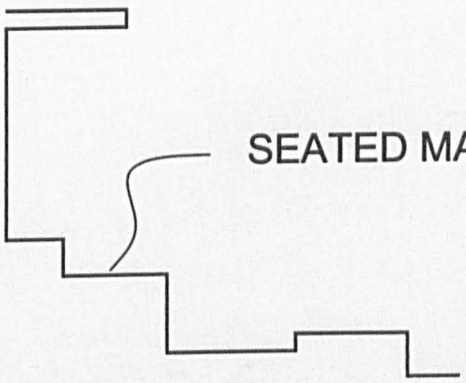


PLAN

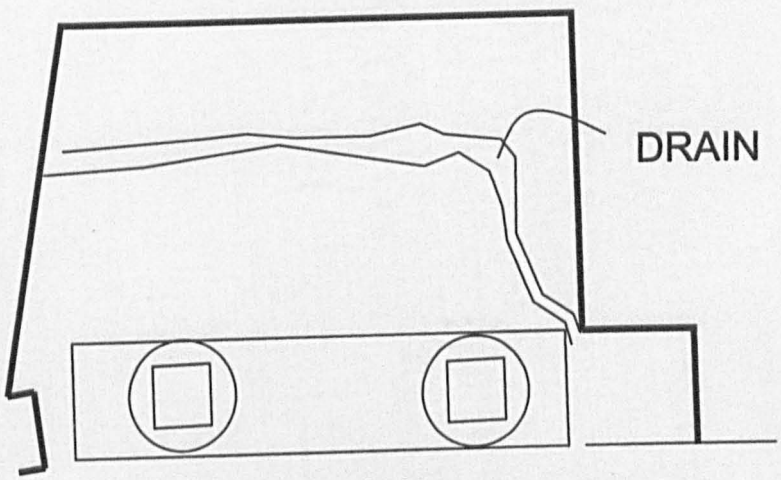
CAVE 4 : DIMENSIONS DOORWAY	N	12
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES		MAP NO.



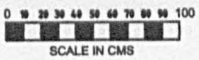
ELEVATION
OF PILASTER



SECTION



PLAN OF MATRIKA CAVE



CAVE 4 (MATRIKA)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

13

MAP NO.

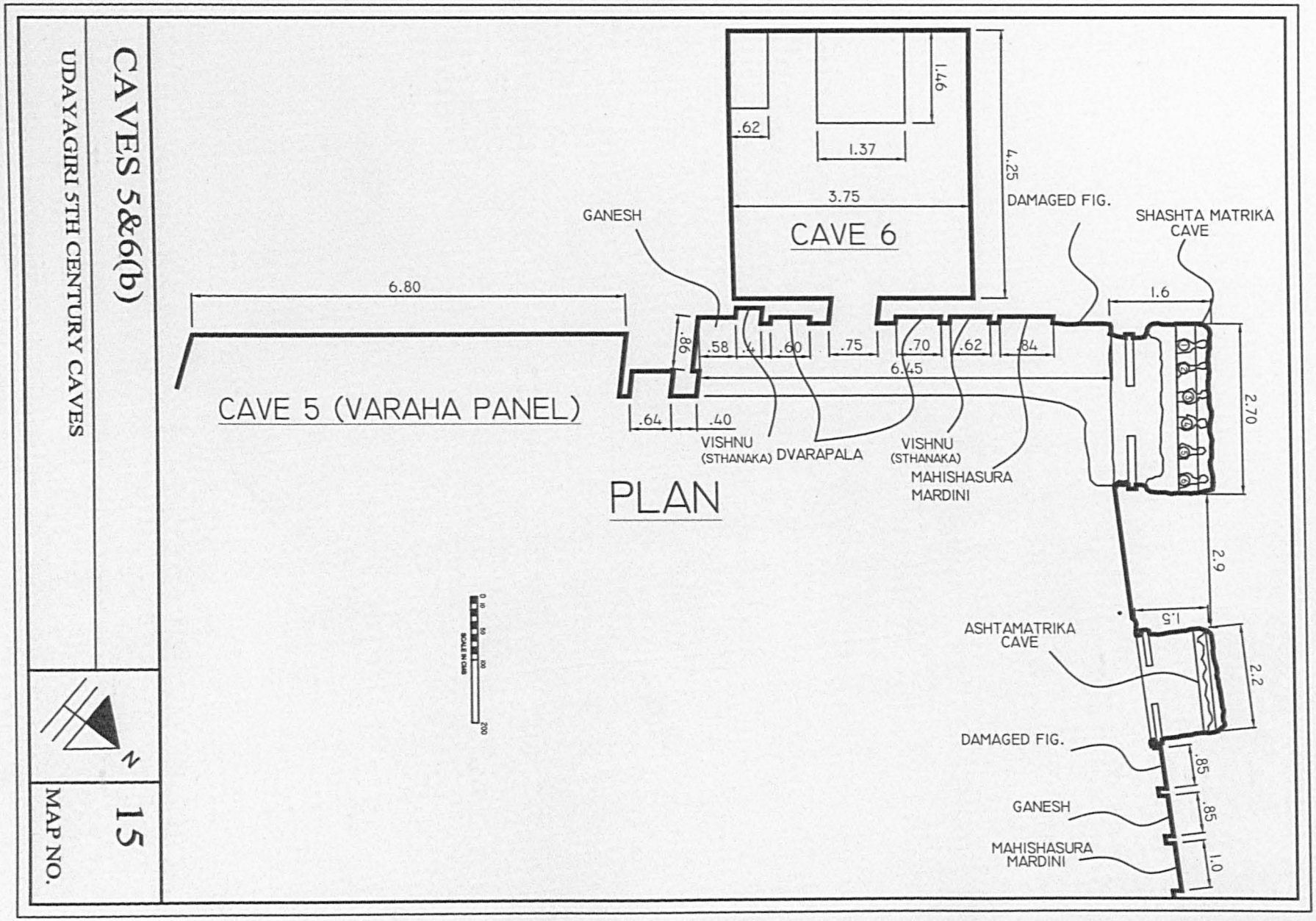
CAVES 5&6(a)

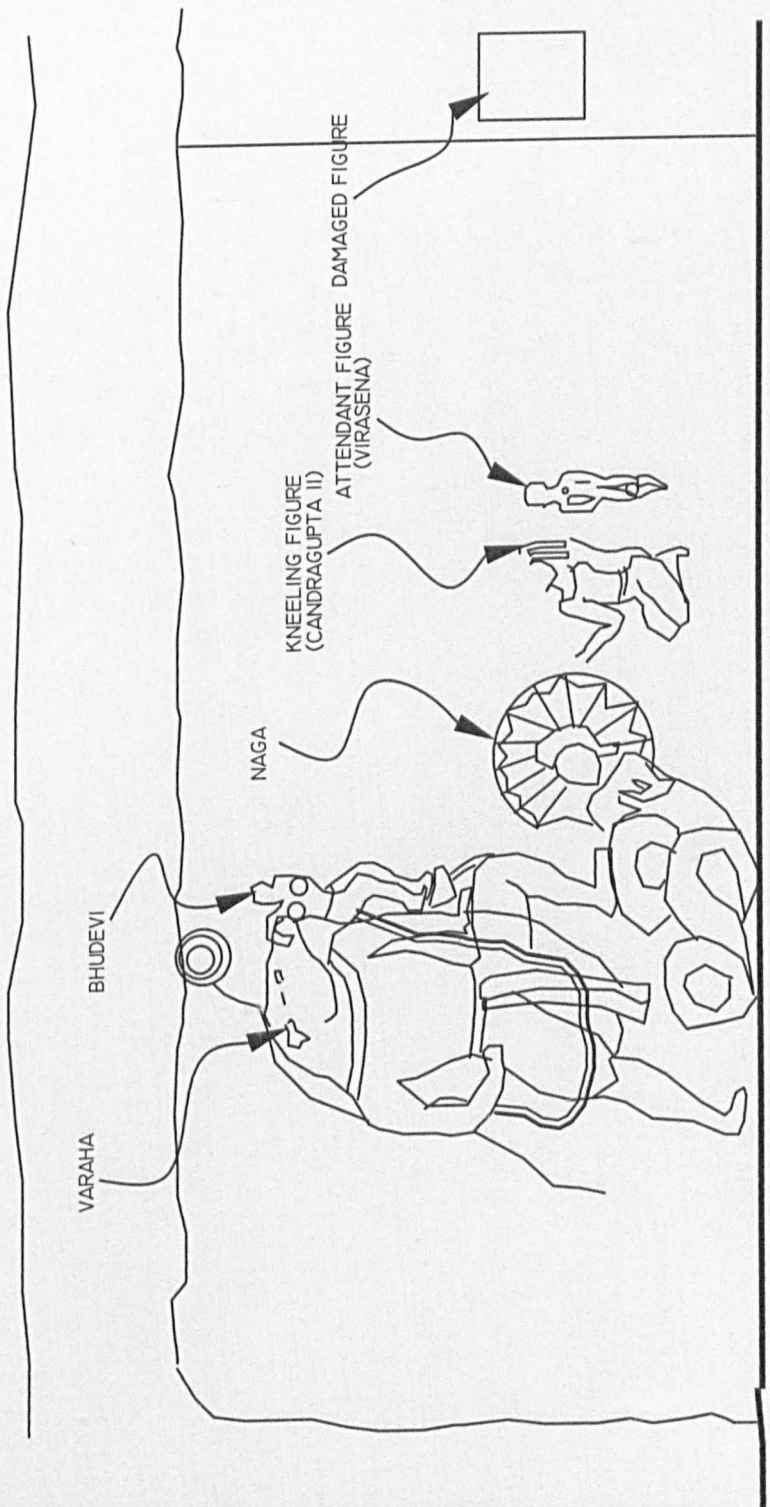
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

ELEVATION

PLAN

MAP NO. 14


CAVES 5&6(b)
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES
MAP NO. 15
N
CAVE 6
CAVE 5 (VARAHA PANEL)
PLAN
GANESH
DAMAGED FIG.
SHASHTA MATRIKA CAVE
VISHNU (STHANAKA)
DVARAPALA
VISHNU (STHANAKA)
MAHISHASURA MARDINI
ASHTAMATRIKA CAVE
DAMAGED FIG.
GANESH
MAHISHASURA MARDINI
6.80
3.75
1.37
.62
1.46
4.25
1.6
.86
.58
.4
.60
.75
.70
.62
.84
6.45
.64
.40
2.70
2.9
1.5
2.2
.85
.85
1.0

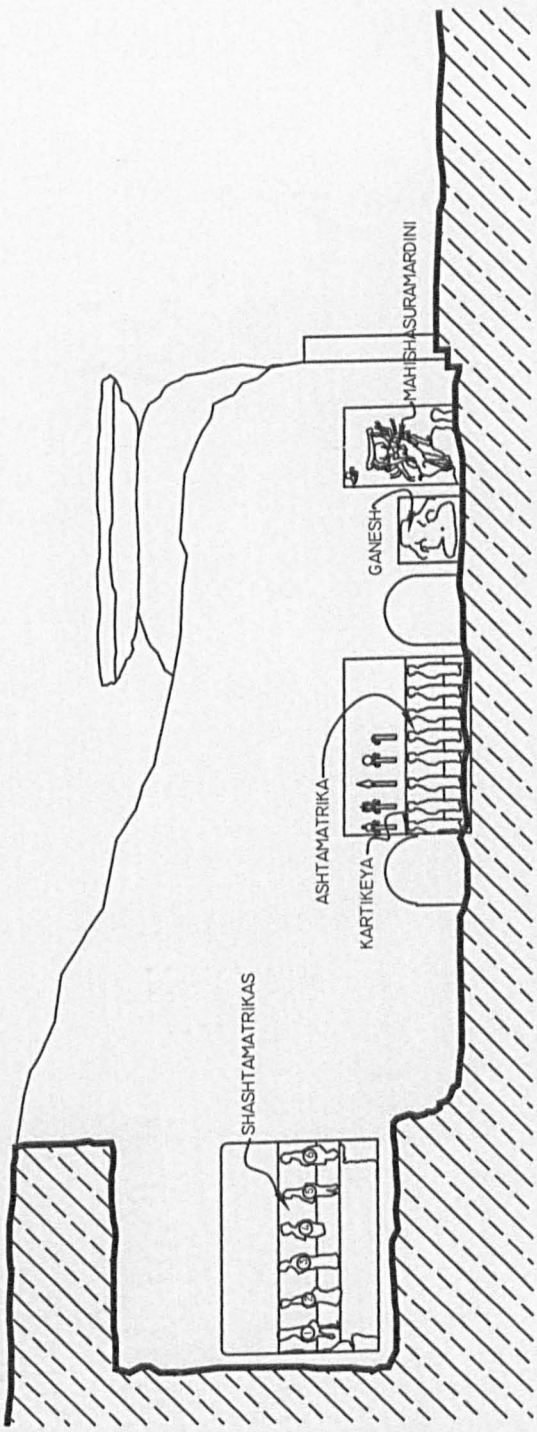


CAVES 5&6(c) ELEVATION CAVE 5

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

16

MAP NO.



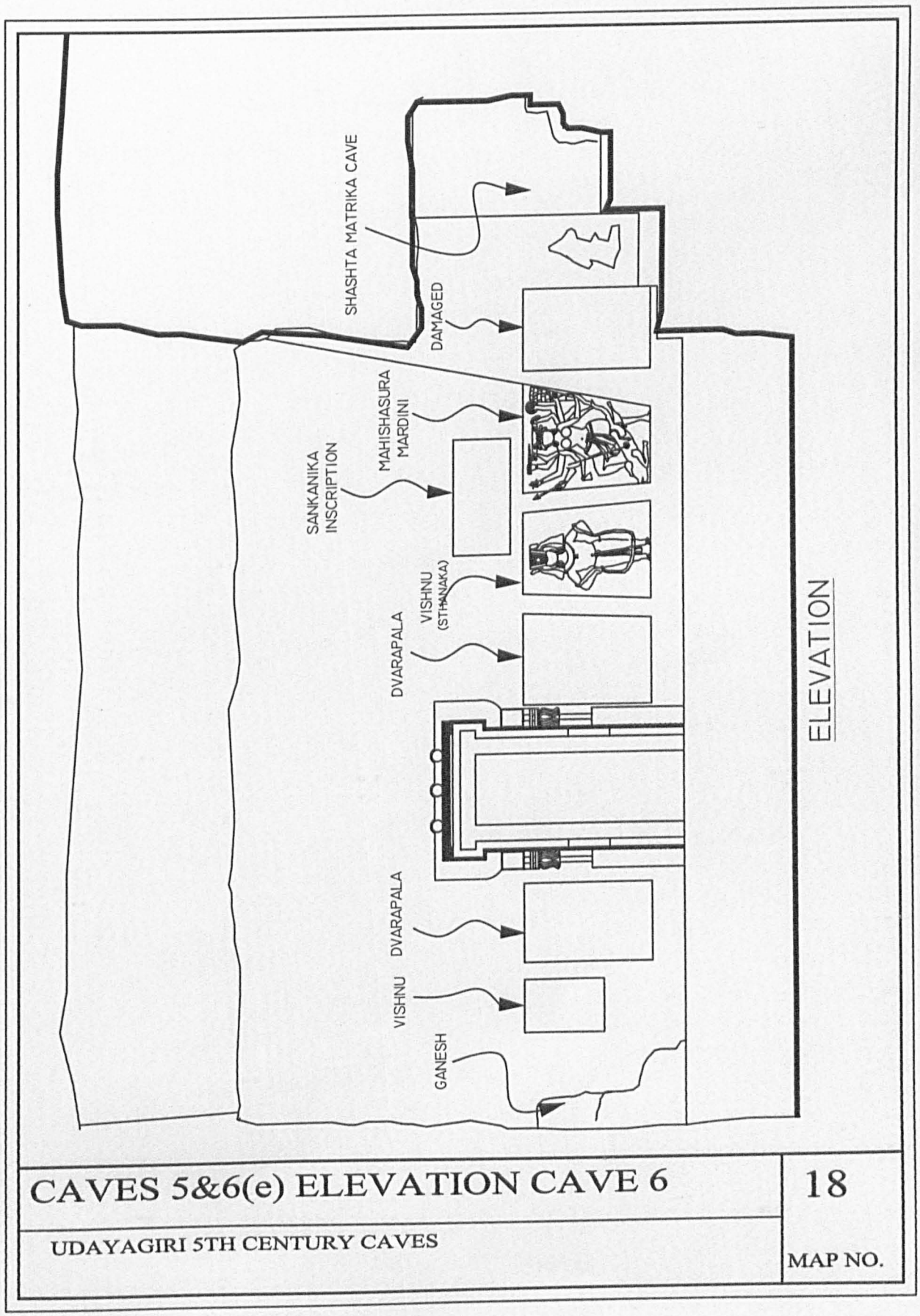
SIDE ELEVATION

CAVES 5&6(d) SIDE ELEVATION

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

17

MAP NO.



CAVES 5&6(e) ELEVATION CAVE 6

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

18

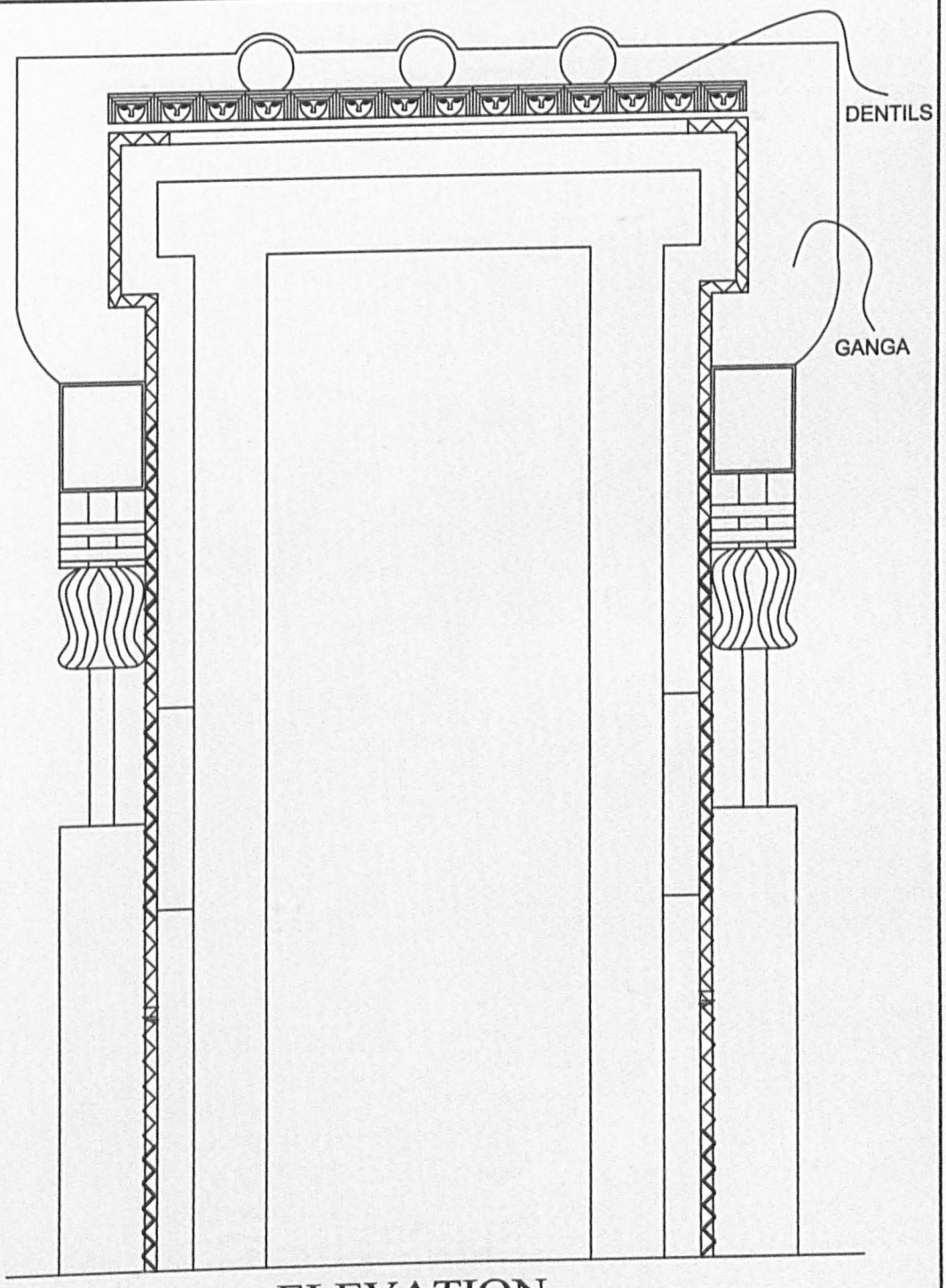
MAP NO.

CAVES 5&6(f) MATRIKAS

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

19

MAP NO.



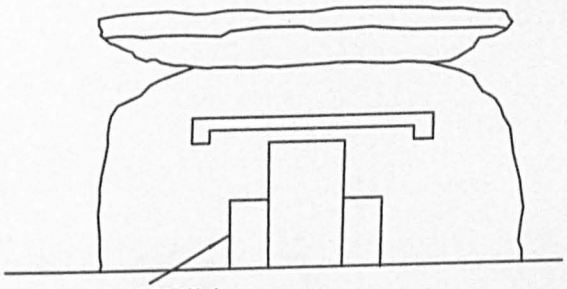
ELEVATION

CAVES 5&6(g) DOORWAY CAVE 6

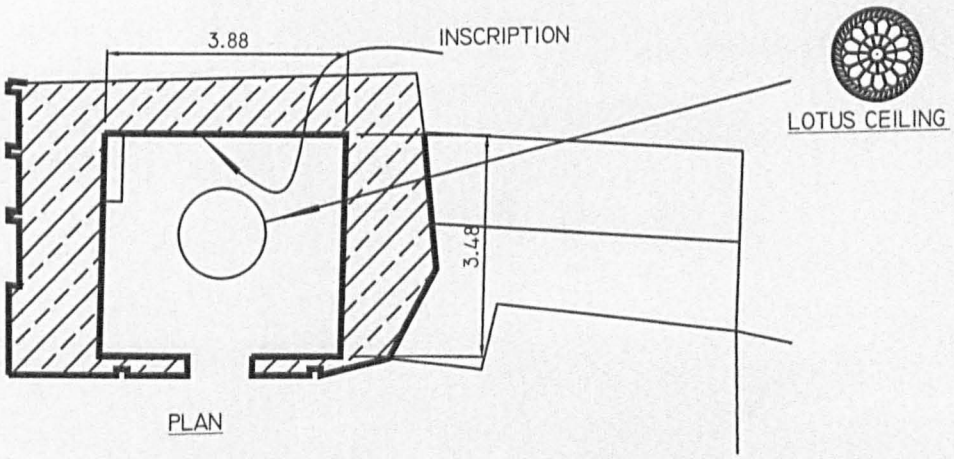
20

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

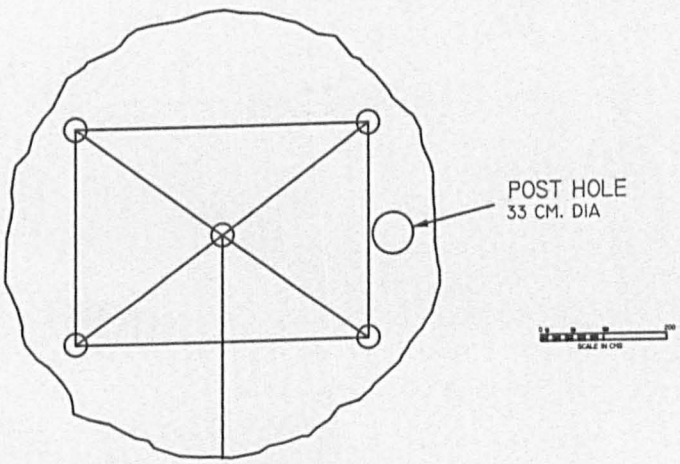
MAP NO.



ELEVATION



PLAN



TERRACE PLAN

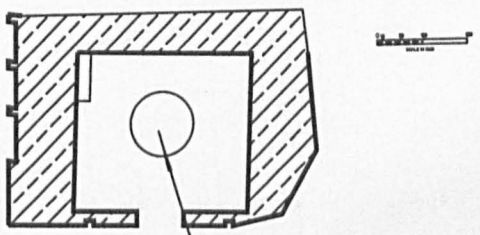
CAVE 7

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

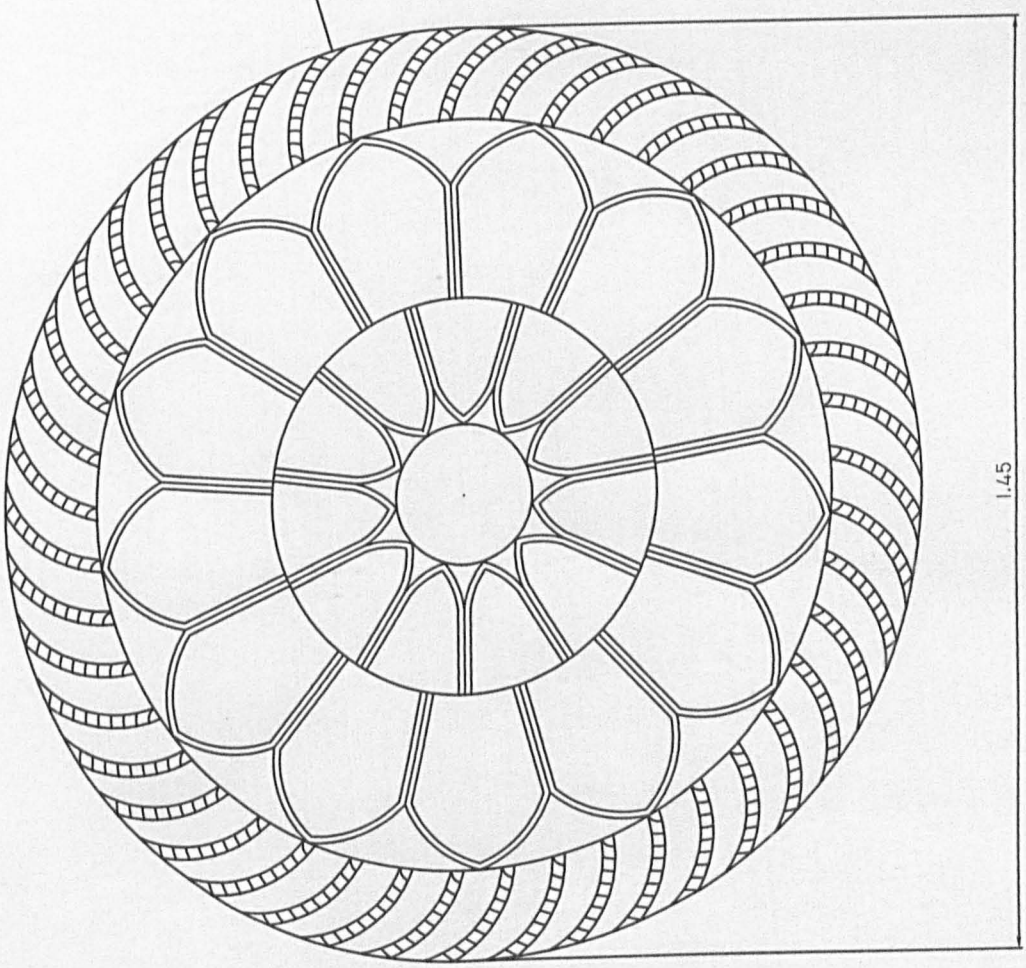
N

21

MAP NO.



PLAN



CAVE 7 (LOTUS CEILING)

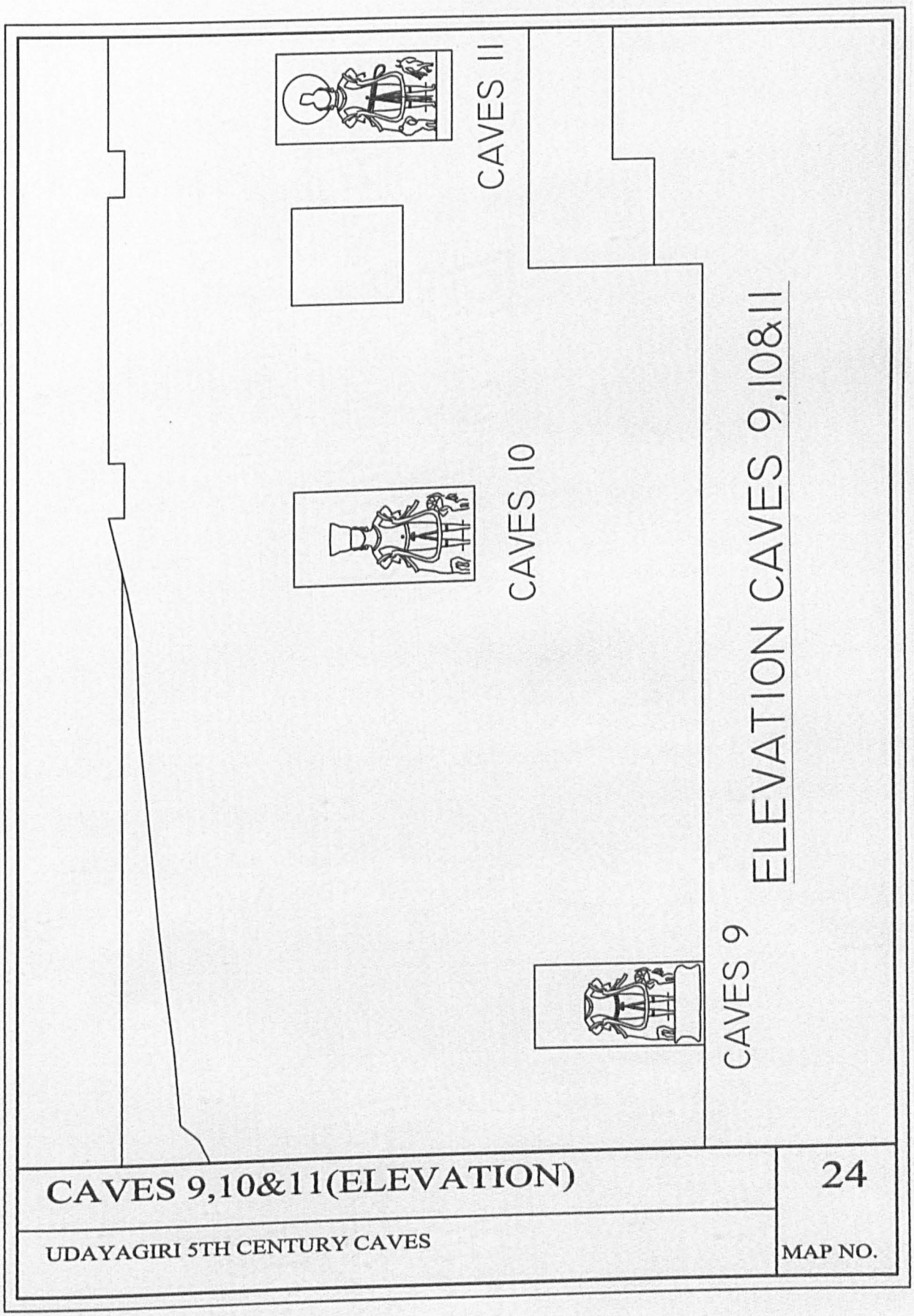
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

22

MAP NO.

CAVES 8,9,10&11(PLAN)
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES
MAP NO.
23
35X35
(NOTCH IN THE FLOOR)
JAMB (BROKEN)
CAVE 8
(BROKEN)
VISHNU
CAVE 9
VISHNU
CAVE 10
VISHNU
CAVE 11
PLAN

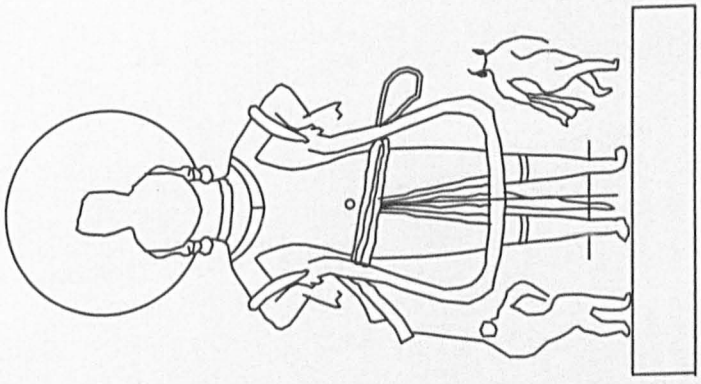


CAVES 9,10&11(ELEVATION)

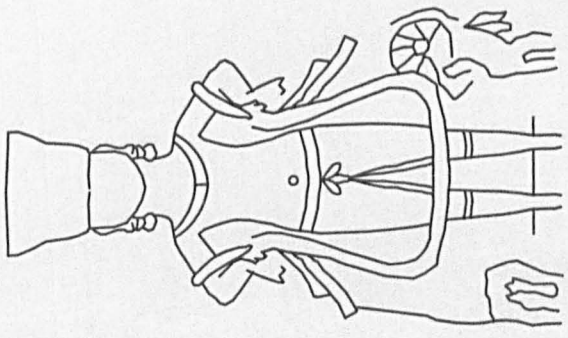
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

24

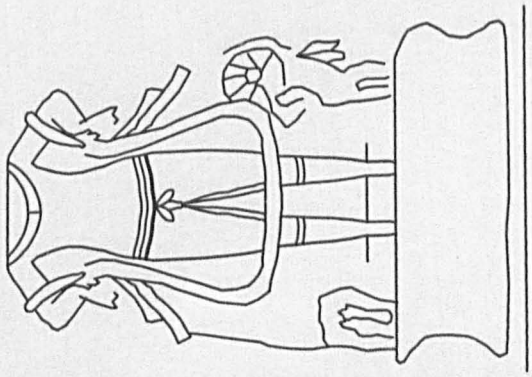
MAP NO.



CAVE 11



CAVE 10



CAVE 9

CAVE 9,10&11 (IMAGES INSIDE)

25

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

MAP NO.

CAVES 12&13

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

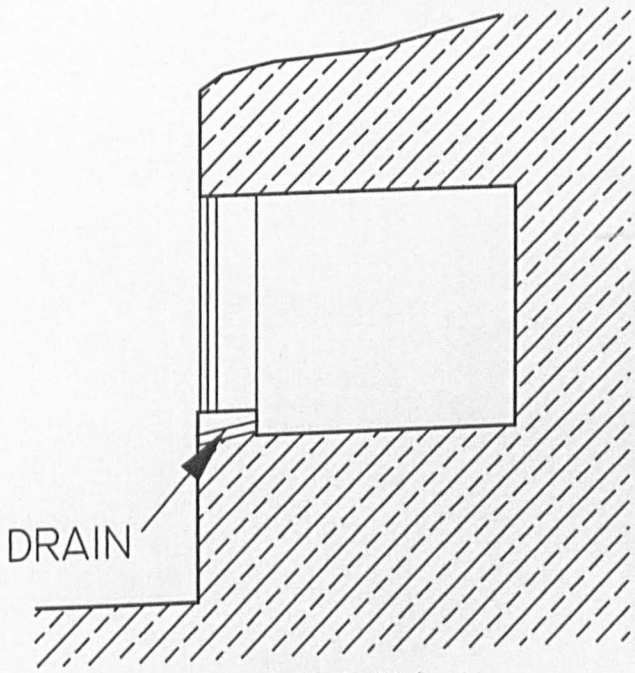
ELEVATION CAVES 12&13

CAVE 12

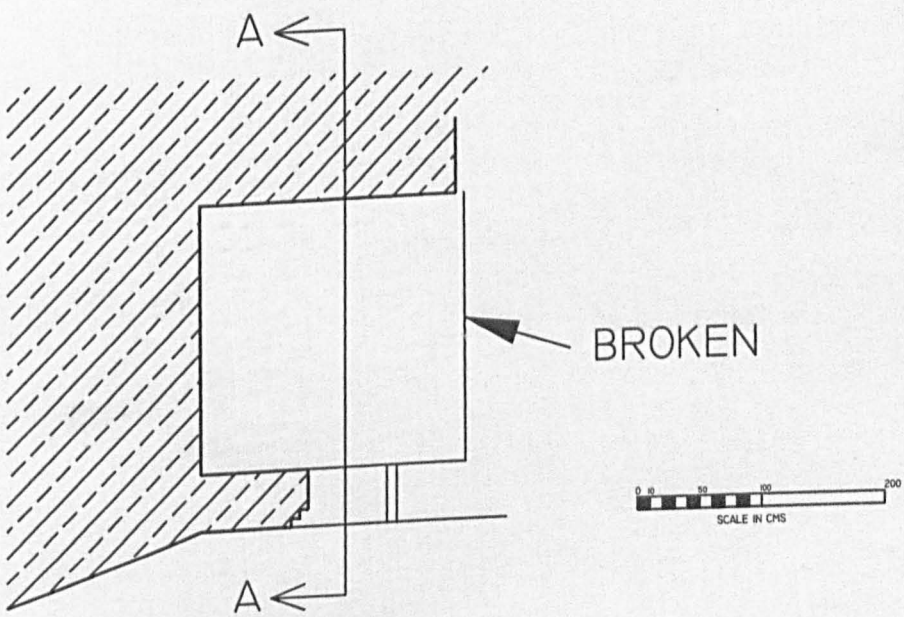
CAVE 13

PLAN

MAP NO. 26



SECTION



PLAN

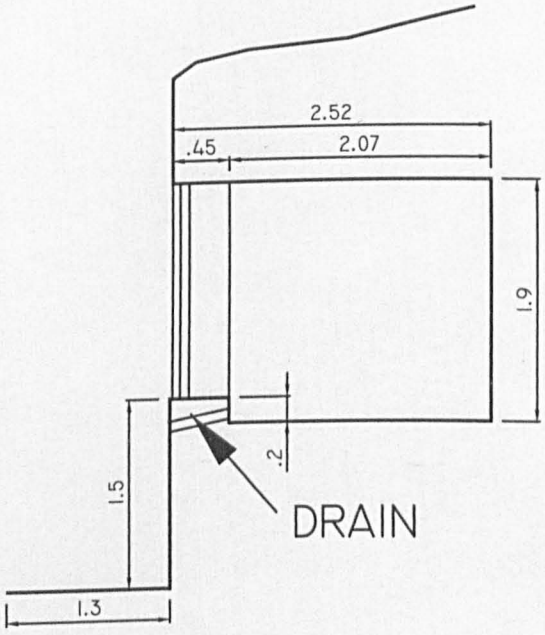
CAVE 14

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

27

MAP NO.



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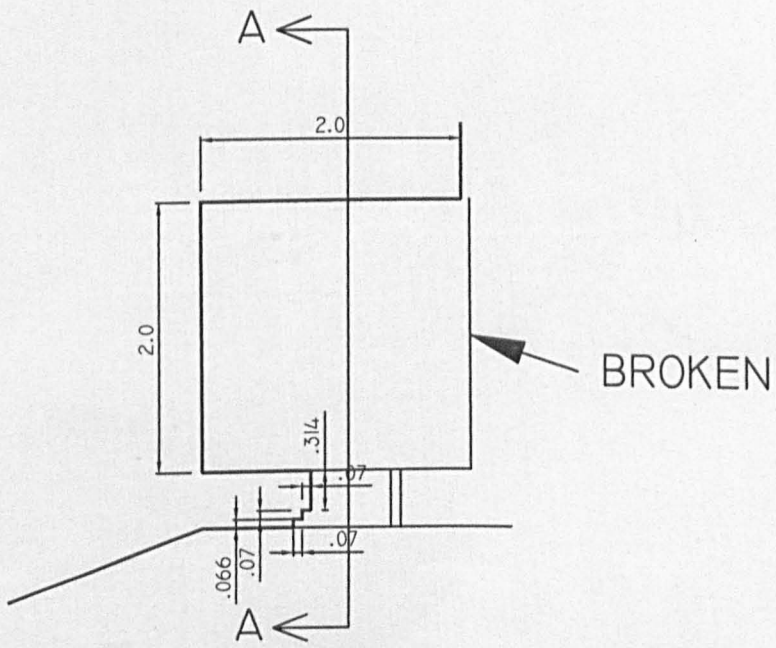


PLAN

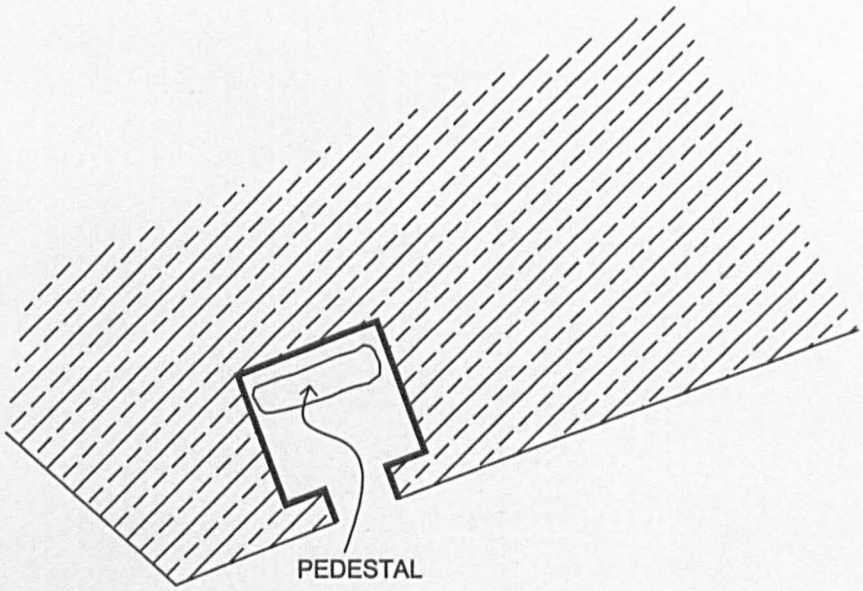
CAVE 14 (DIMENSIONS)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

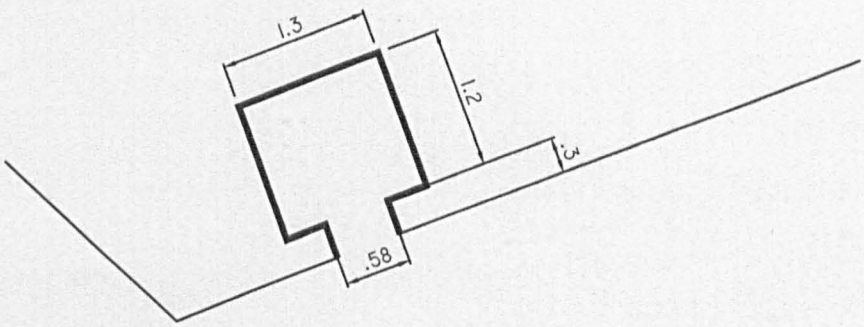
N

28

MAP NO.



PLAN



PLAN

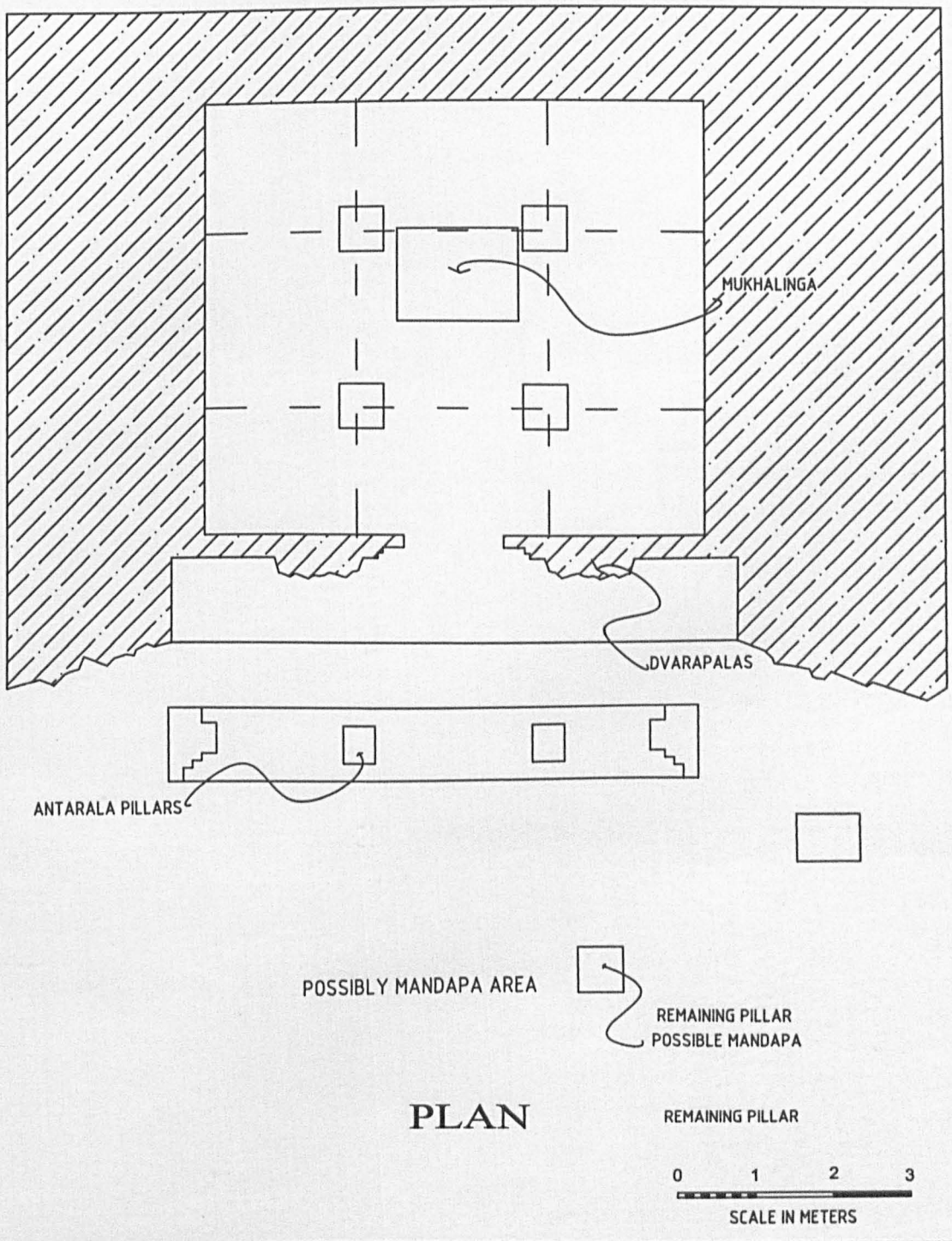
CAVE 15

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

29

MAP NO.



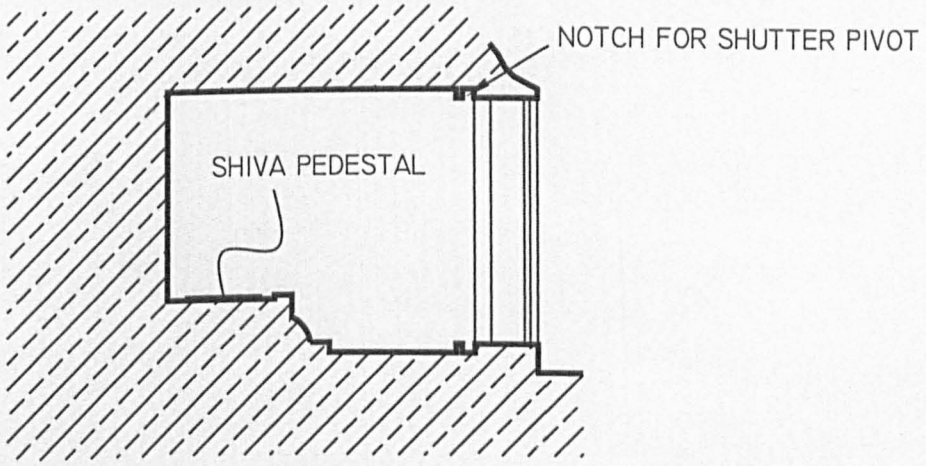
PLAN

CAVE 19

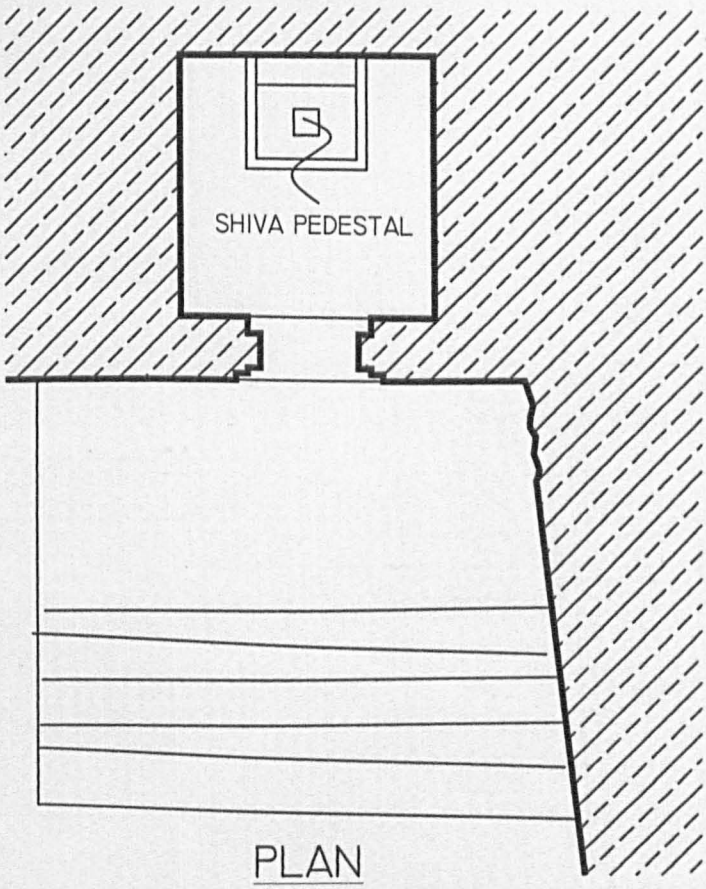
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

30

DATA NO.



SECTION



PLAN

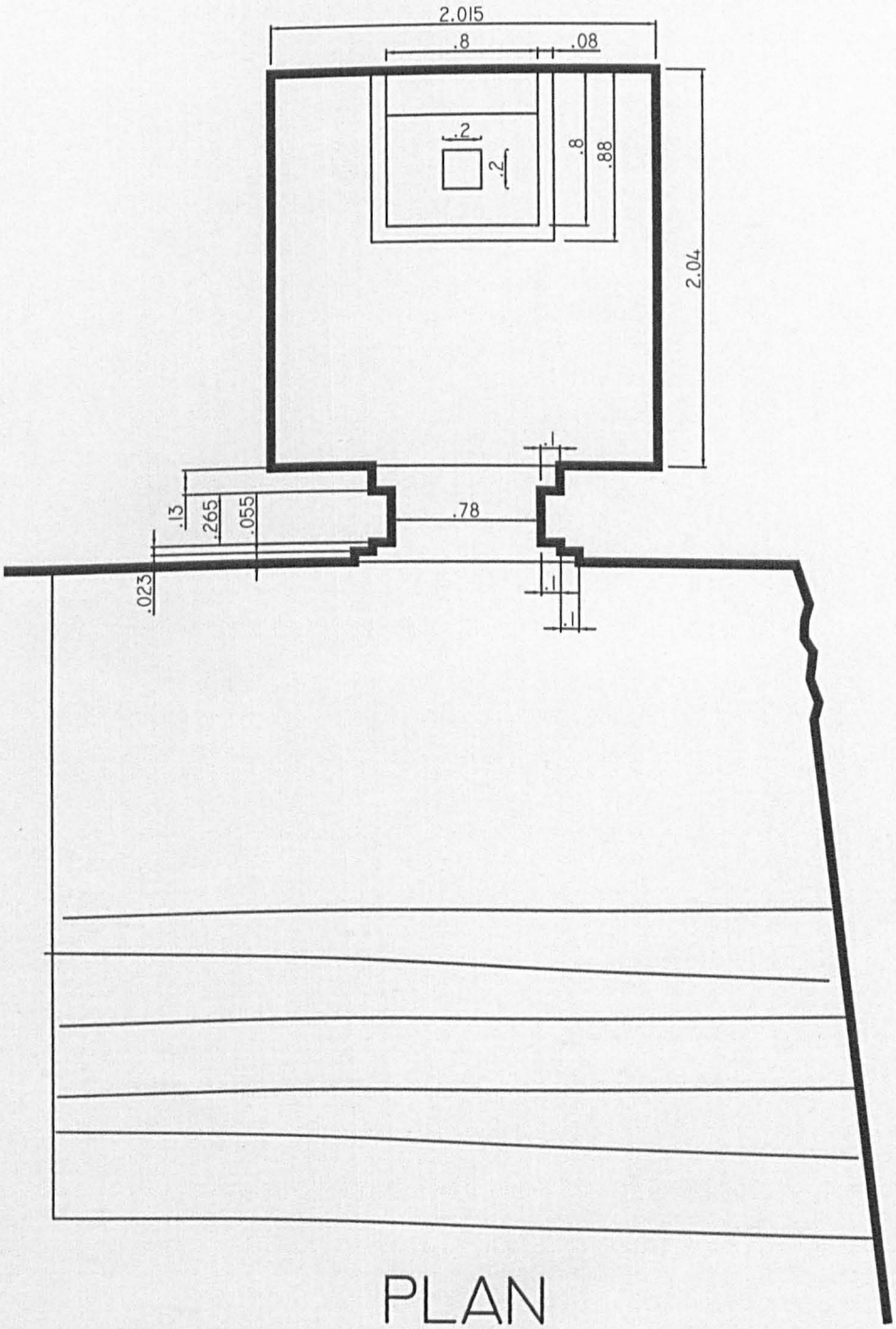
CAVE 16

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

31

MAP NO.



PLAN

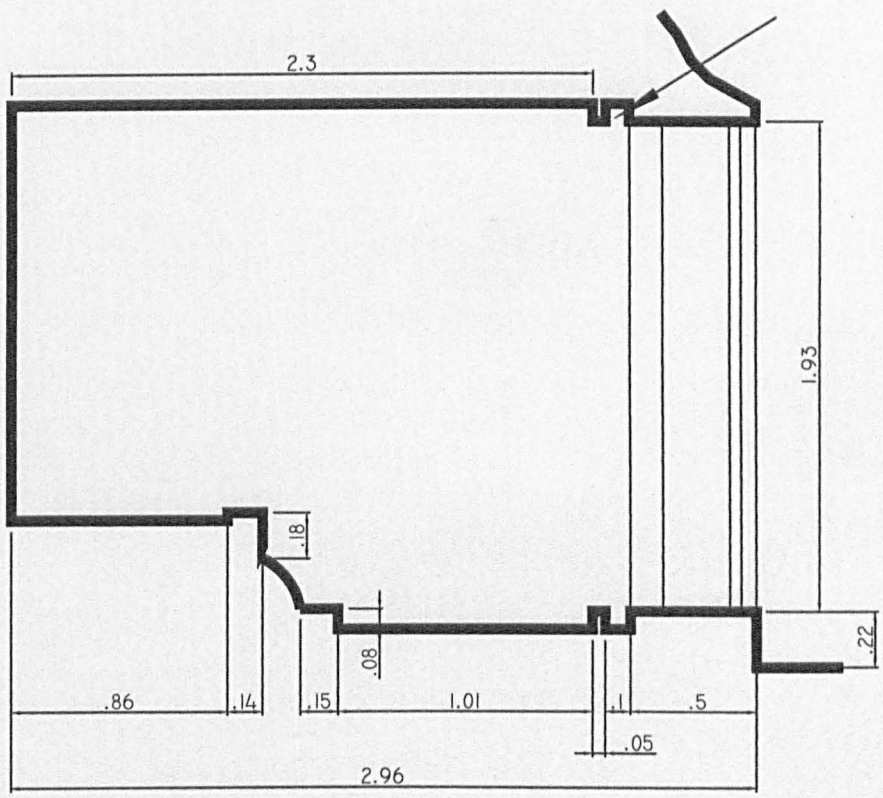
CAVE 16 (DIMENSIONS PLAN)

32

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

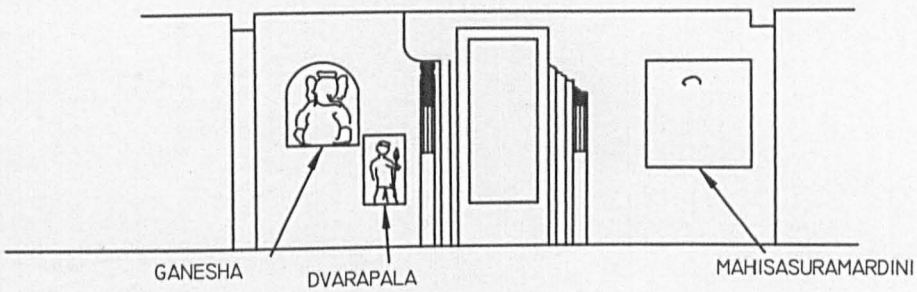
MAP NO.

NOTCH FOR SHUTTER PIVOT



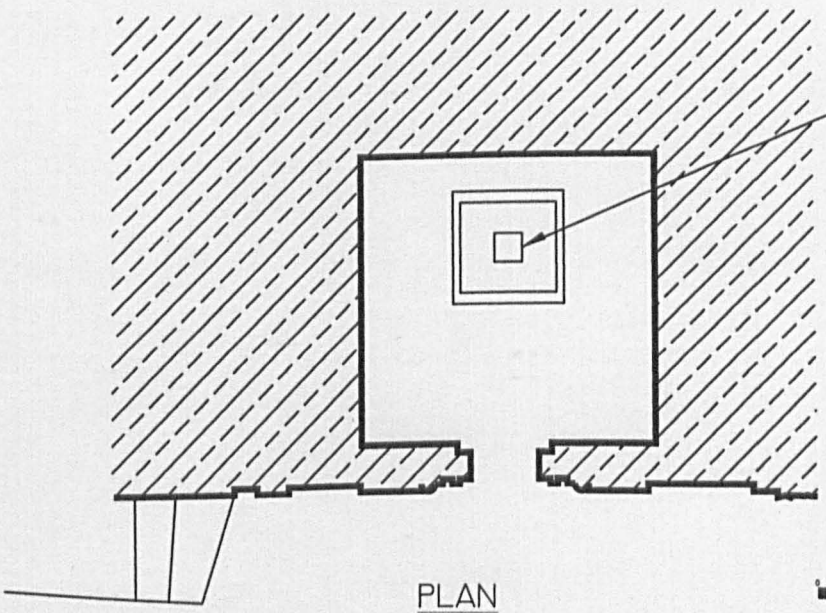
SECTION

CAVE 16 (DIMENSIONS SECTION)	33
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE	MAP NO.



ELEVATION

CEILING



PLAN

CAVE 17

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

34

MAP NO.

CEILING

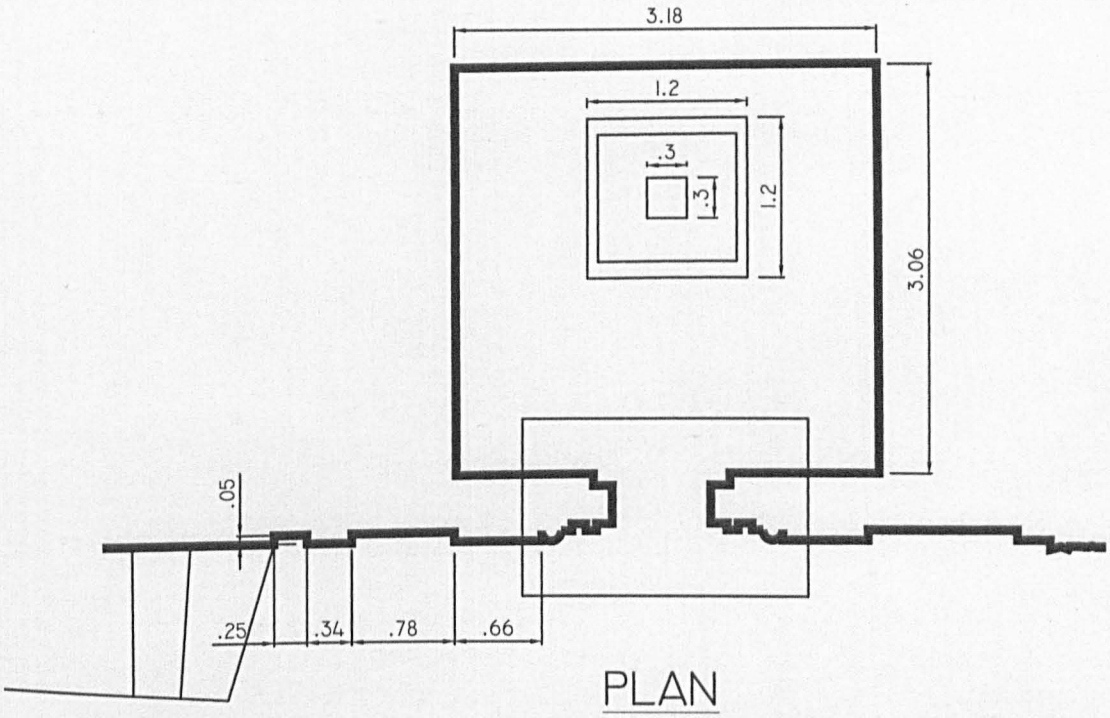
CAVE 17 (CEILING)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

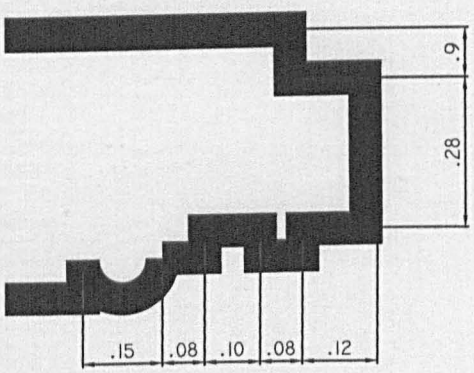
N

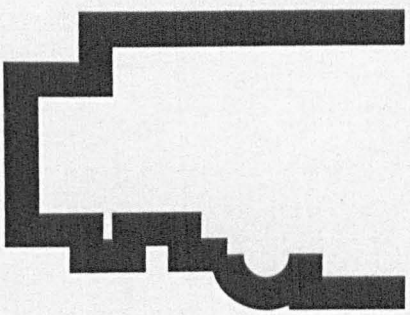
35

MAP NO.



PLAN





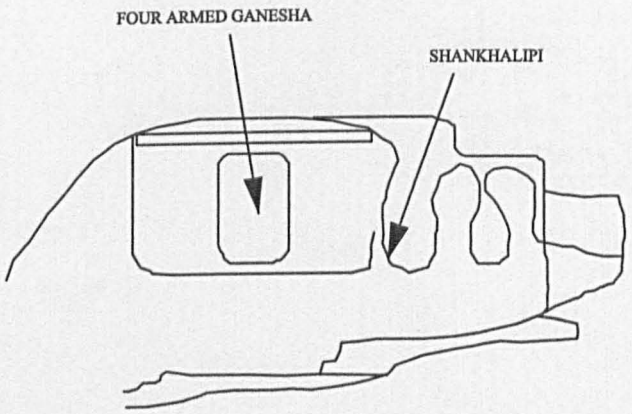
CAVE 17 (DIMENSIONS)

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

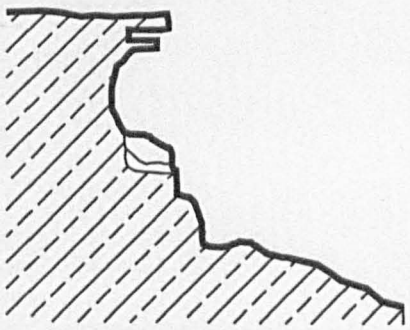
N

36

MAP NO.



ELEVATION



SECTION

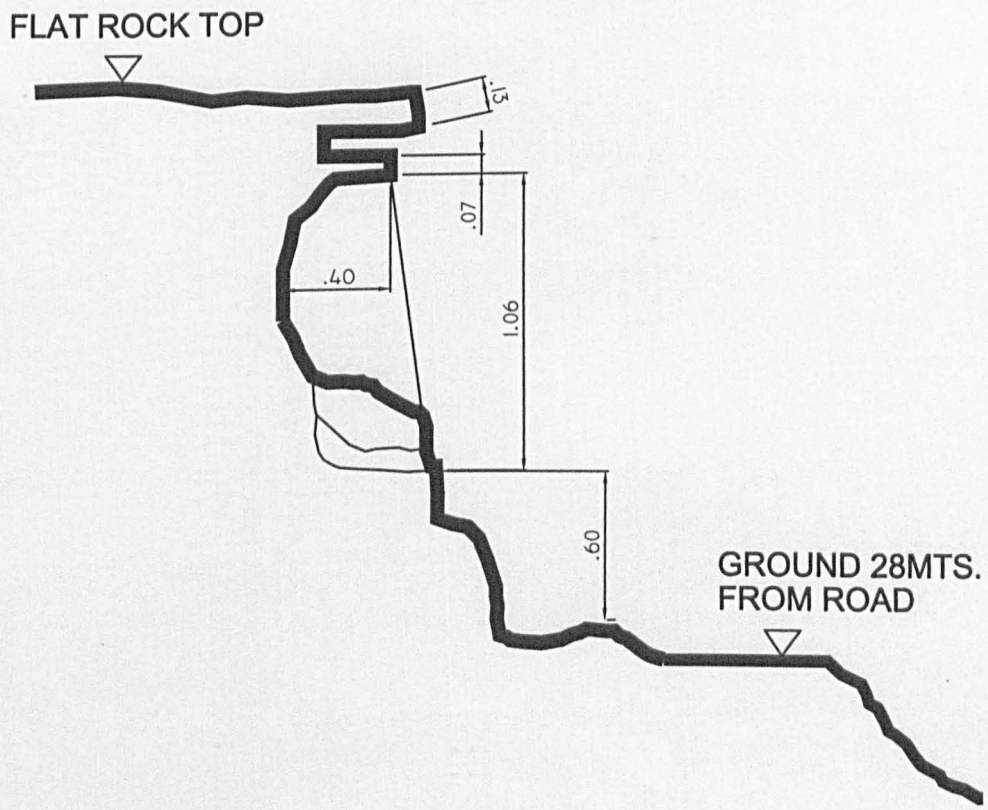
CAVE 18

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

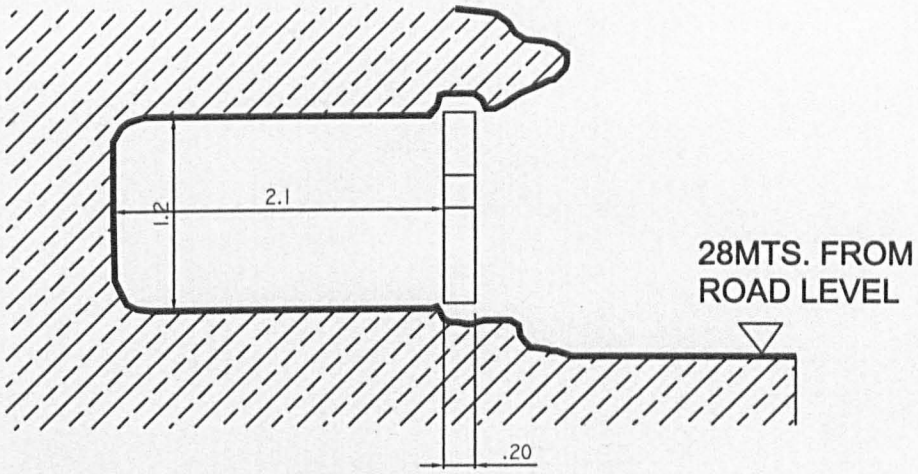
37

MAP NO.

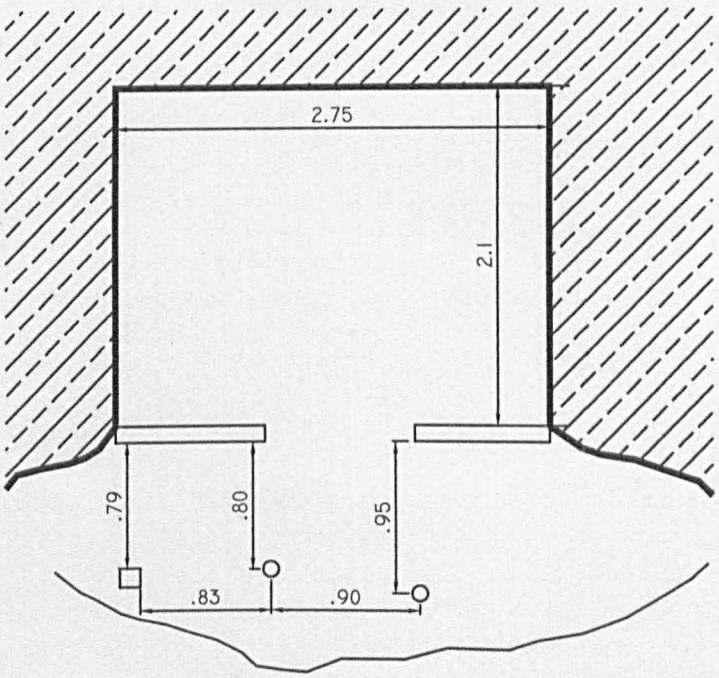


SECTION

CAVE NO. 18 (SECTION)	N	38
UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE		MAP NO.

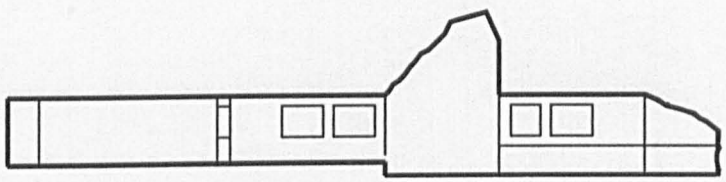


SECTION

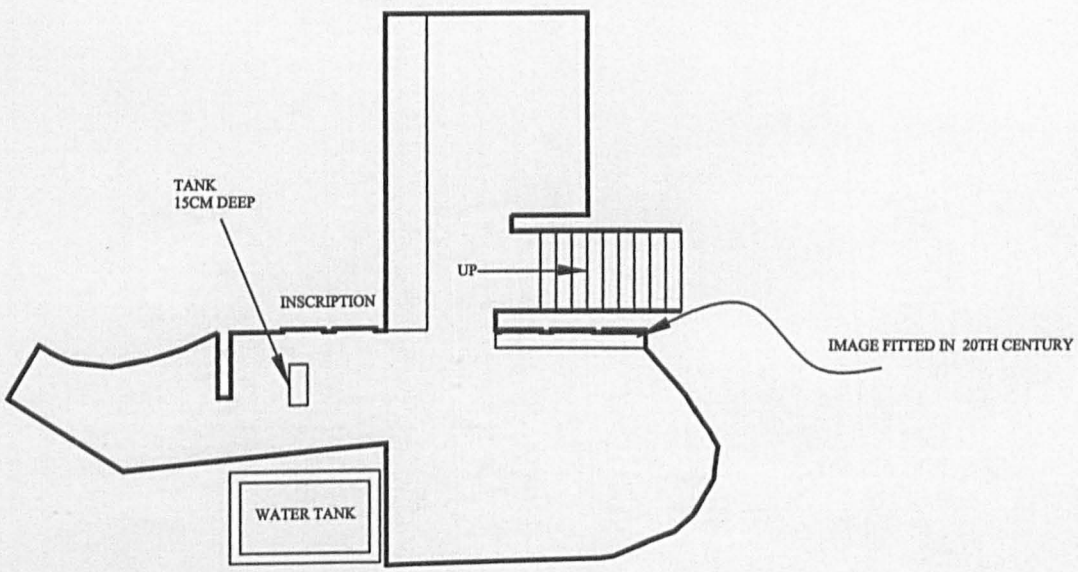


PLAN

CAVE 18B (CAVE NO. IS BY TH E AUTHOR) UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE	N	39 MAP NO.



SECTION



PLAN

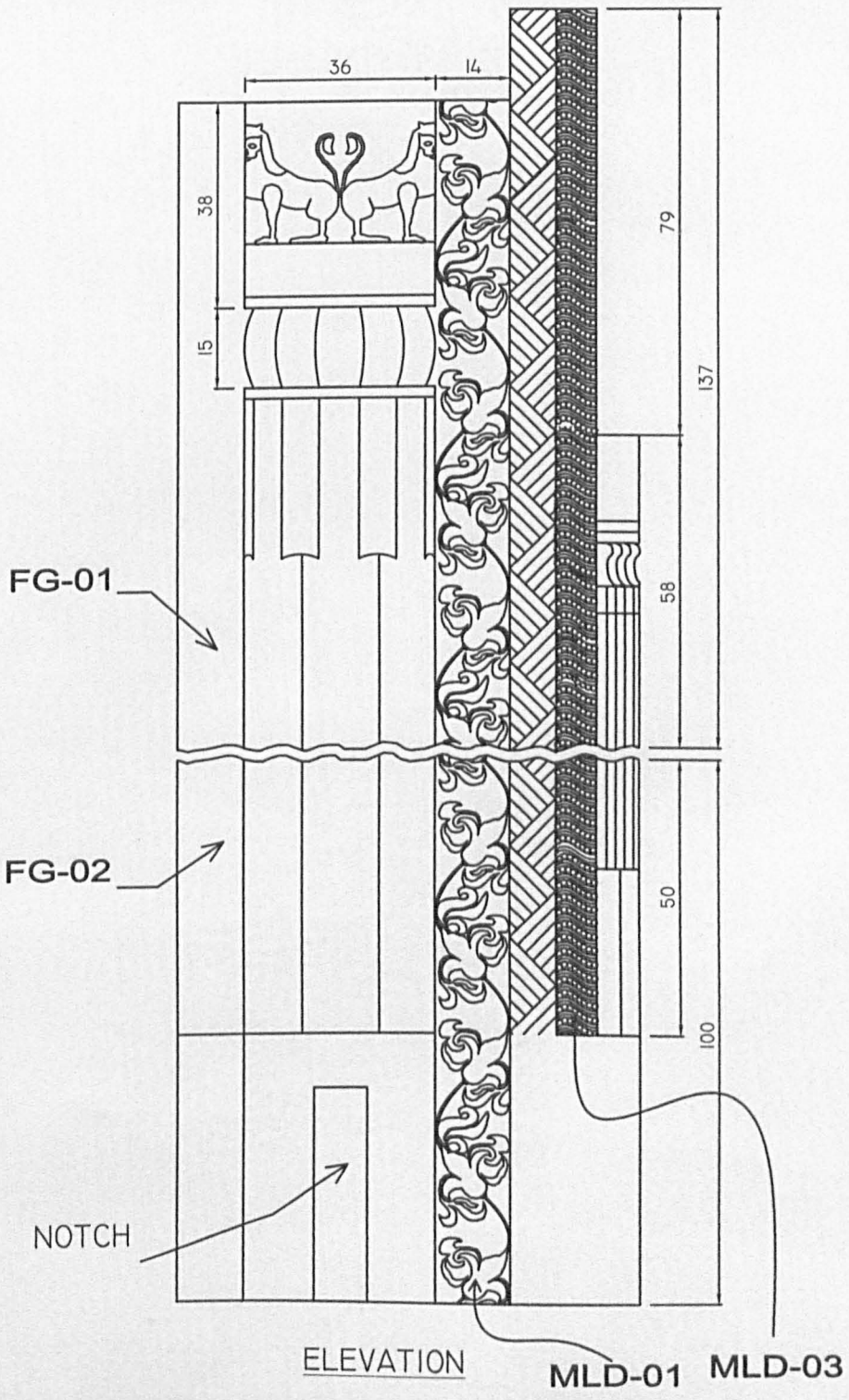
CAVE 20

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

N

40

MAP NO.

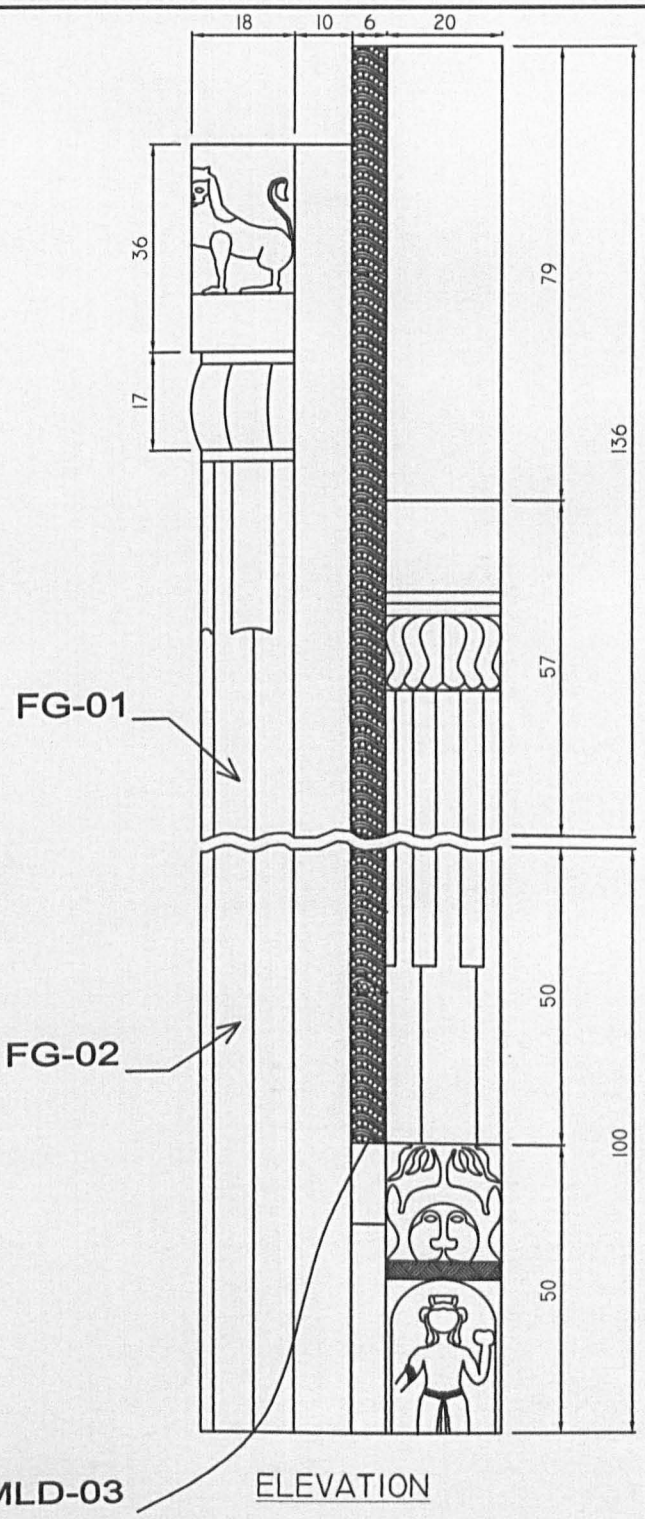


FRONT ELEVATION OF FG-01& FG-02

41

MAP NO.

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION

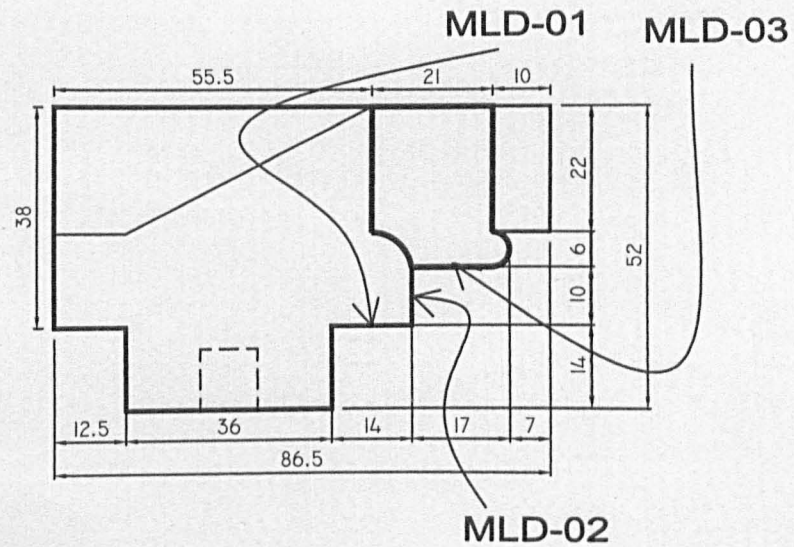


SIDE ELEVATION FRG. 01 & 02

42

MAP NO.

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION



PLAN

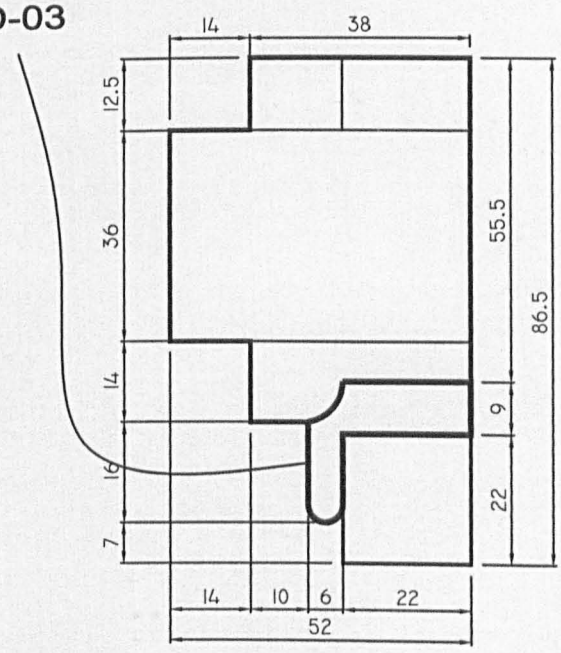
PLAN OF FG-01

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION

43

MAP NO.

MLD-03



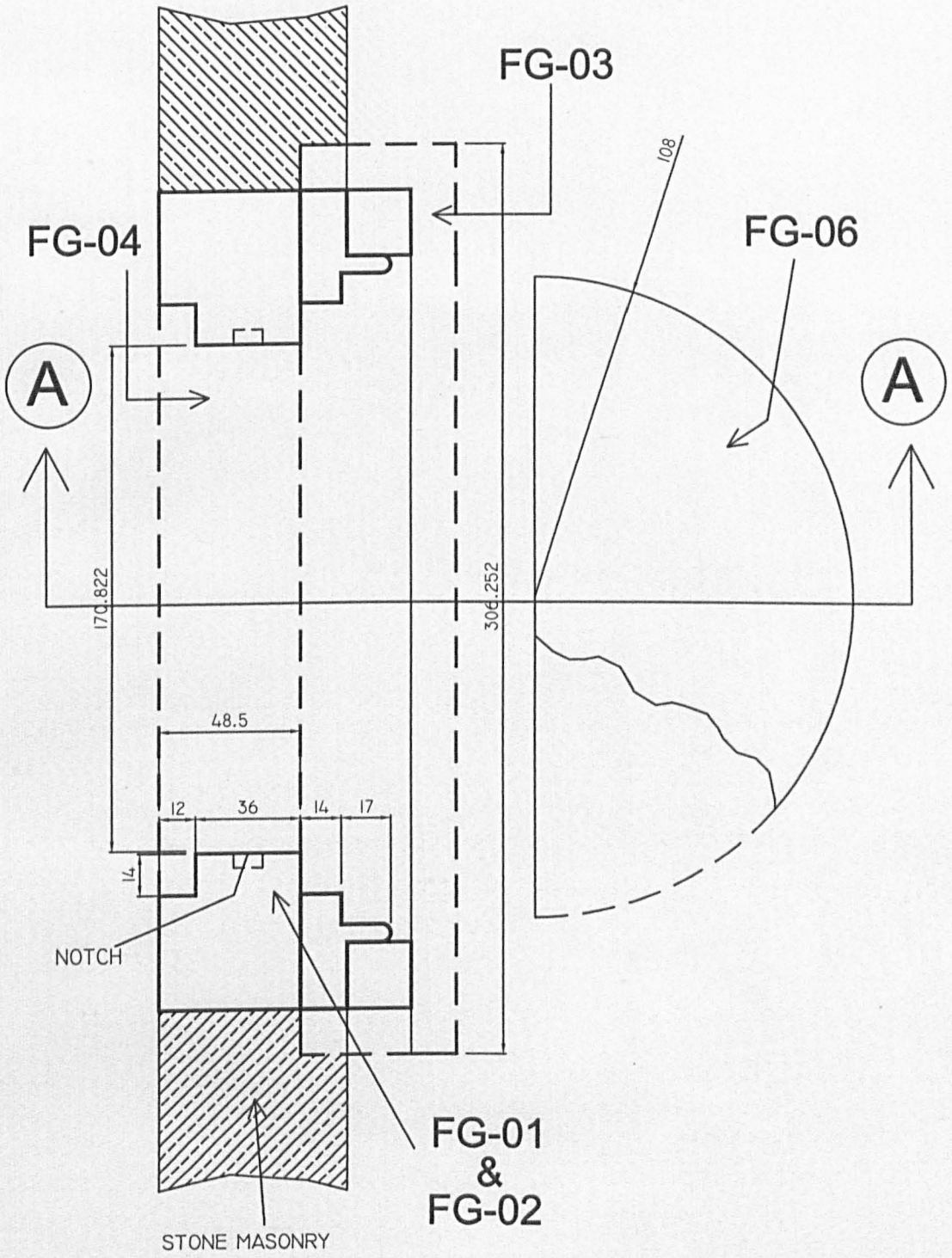
PLAN

PLAN OF FRAGMENT FG-02

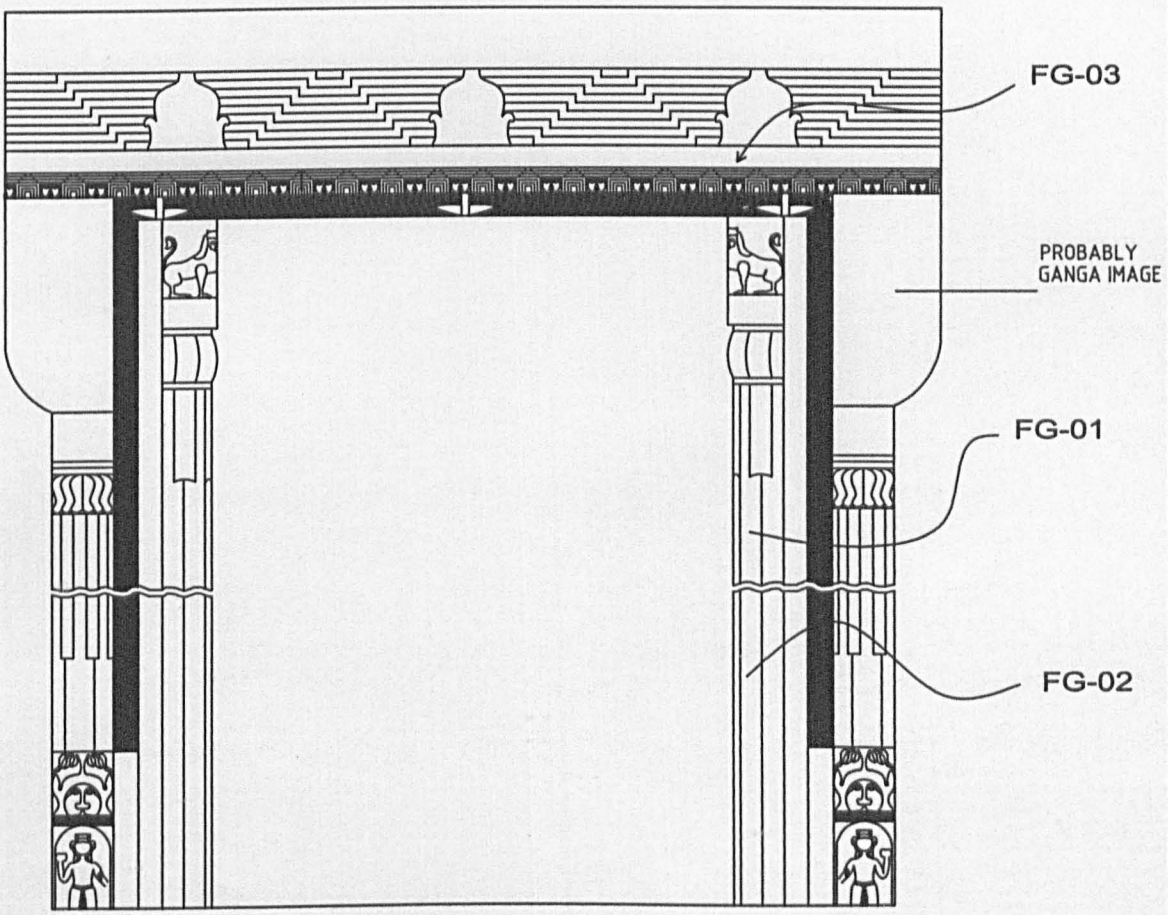
44

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION

MAP NO.



PLAN OF JAMB	45
DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI RECONSTRUCTION	MAP NO.



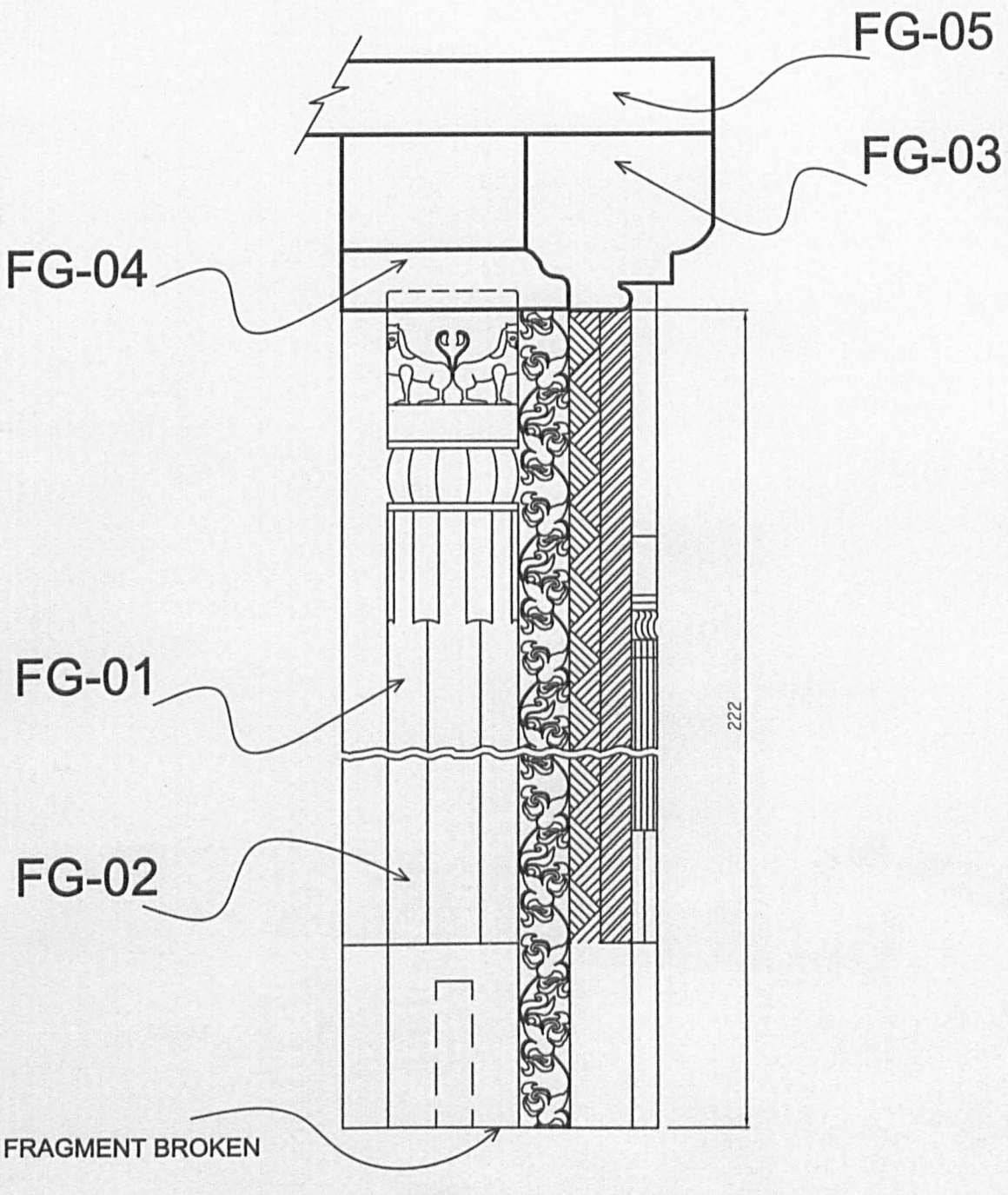
ELEVATION

FRONT ELEVATION OF JAMB

46

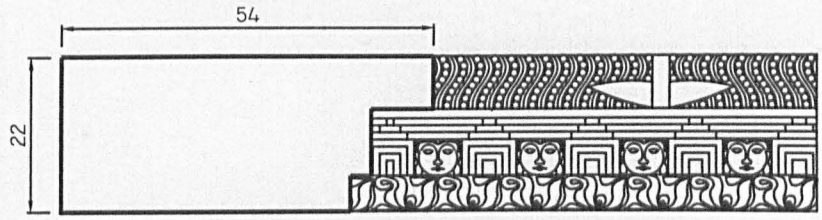
MAP NO.

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION



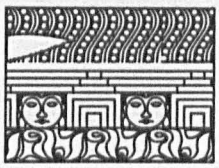
SECTION A-A

SECTION OF JAMB	47
DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI RECONSTRUCTION	MAP NO.



FG-09 L-SHAPED LINTEL

FG-10



FG-11

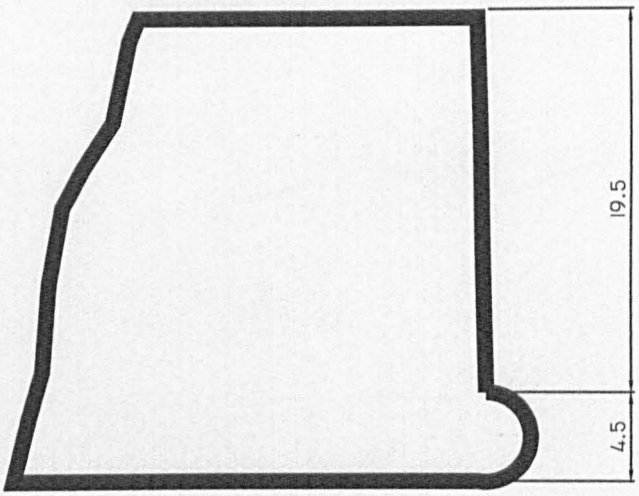
FG-12

LINTELS WITH DENTILS

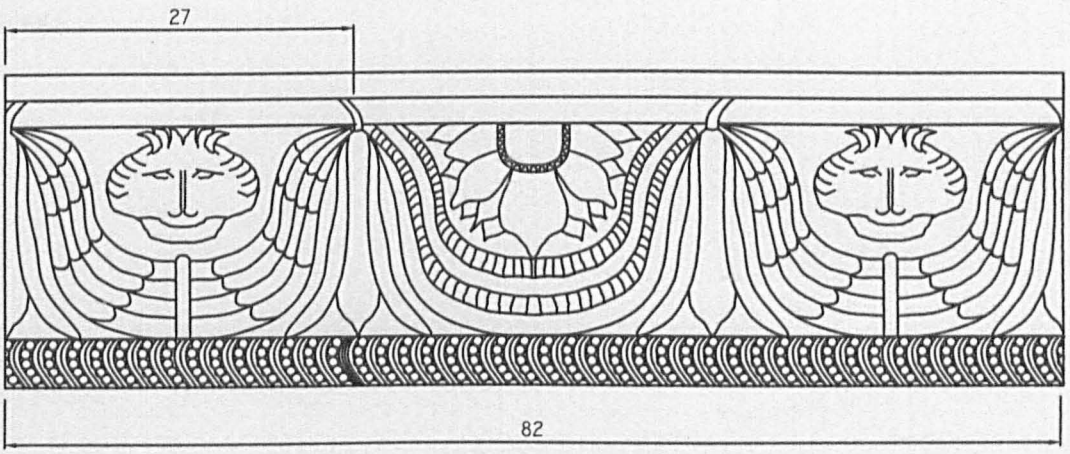
48

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION

MAP NO.

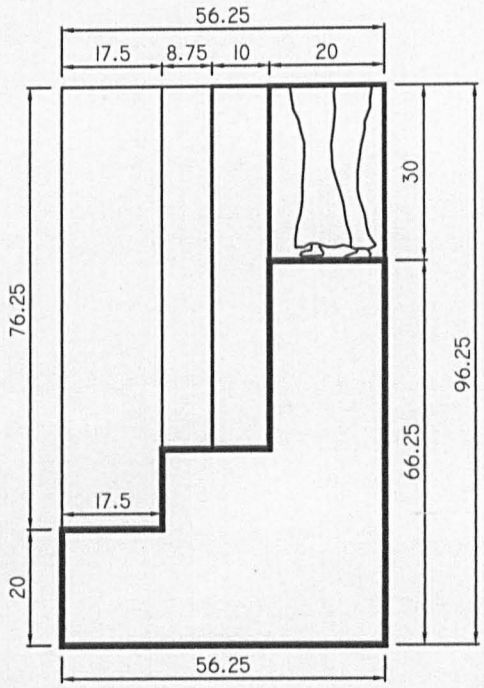


SECTION

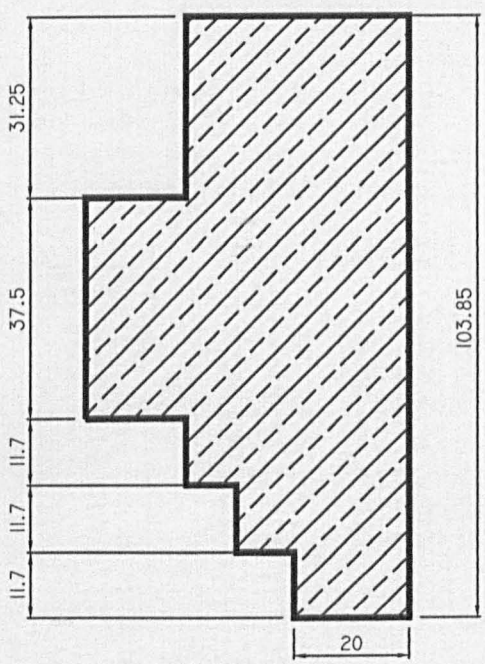


ELEVATION

FRONT ELEVATION OF FG-05	49
DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI RECONSTRUCTION	MAP NO.



ELEVATION



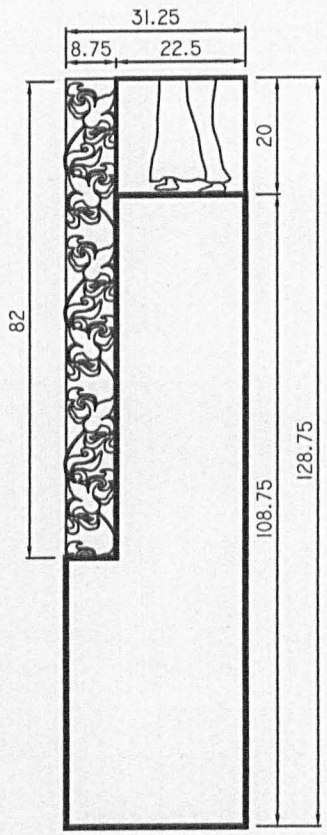
PLAN

JAMB OF MANDAPA FG-07

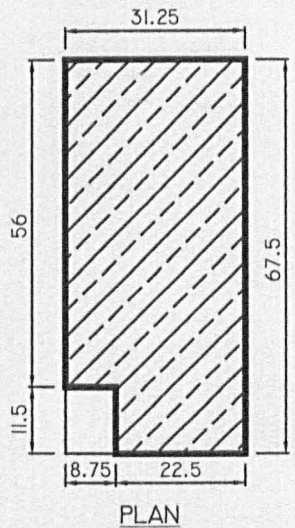
DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI

50

MAP NO.



ELEVATION



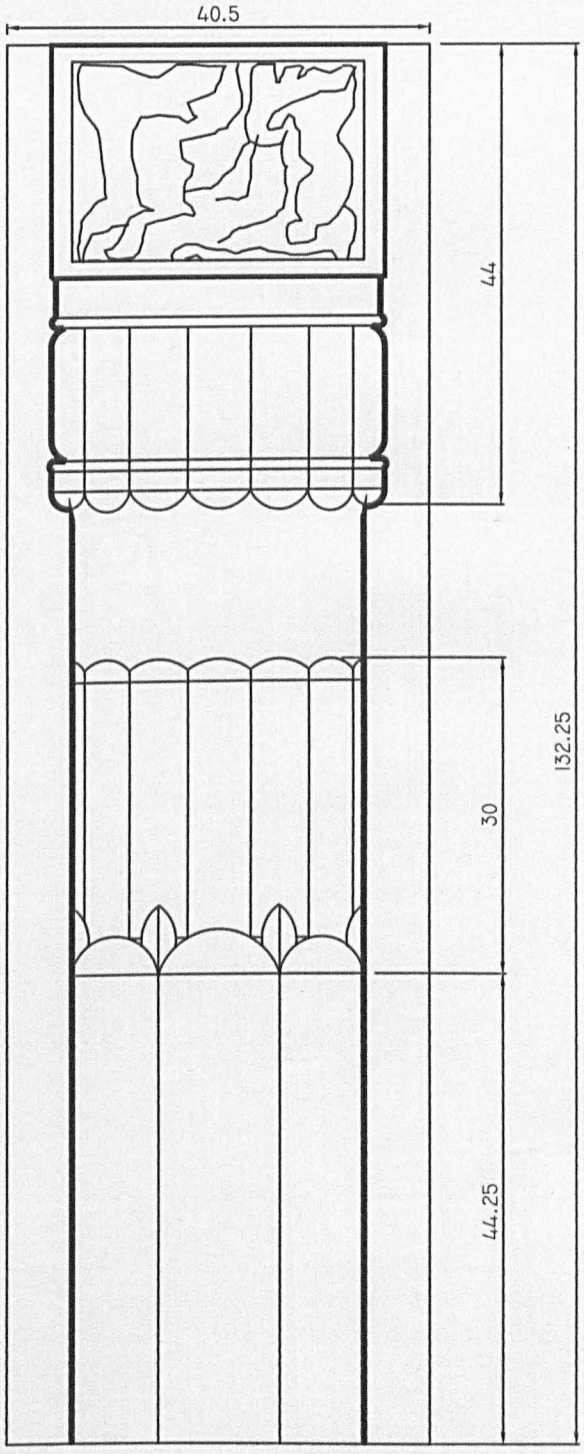
PLAN

JAMB OF MANDAPA FG-08

DOORWAY OF TEMPLE (N.H.)

51

MAP NO.



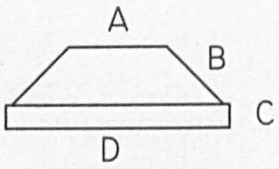
ELEVATION

ELEVATION OF PILASTER

TEMPLE (N.H.)

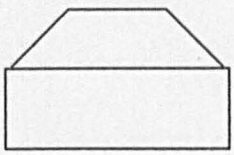
52

MAP NO.



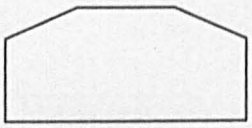
FG-14
(WITH LION HEADS)

		NOS.	TOTAL LENGTH
A:	17	1	80
B:	14		
C:	4		
D:	39		



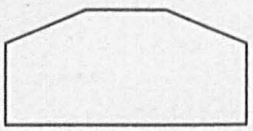
FG-15

		NOS.	TOTAL LENGTH
A:	17	7	4410
B:	14-15		
C:	14		
D:	42-43		



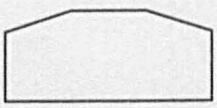
FG-16

		NOS.	TOTAL LENGTH
A:	17	1	50
B:	13		
C:	14		
D:	42		



FG-17
(WITH LION HEADS)

		NOS.	TOTAL LENGTH
A:	14	1	71
B:	15		
C:	14		
D:	42		



FG-18
(WITH LION HEADS)

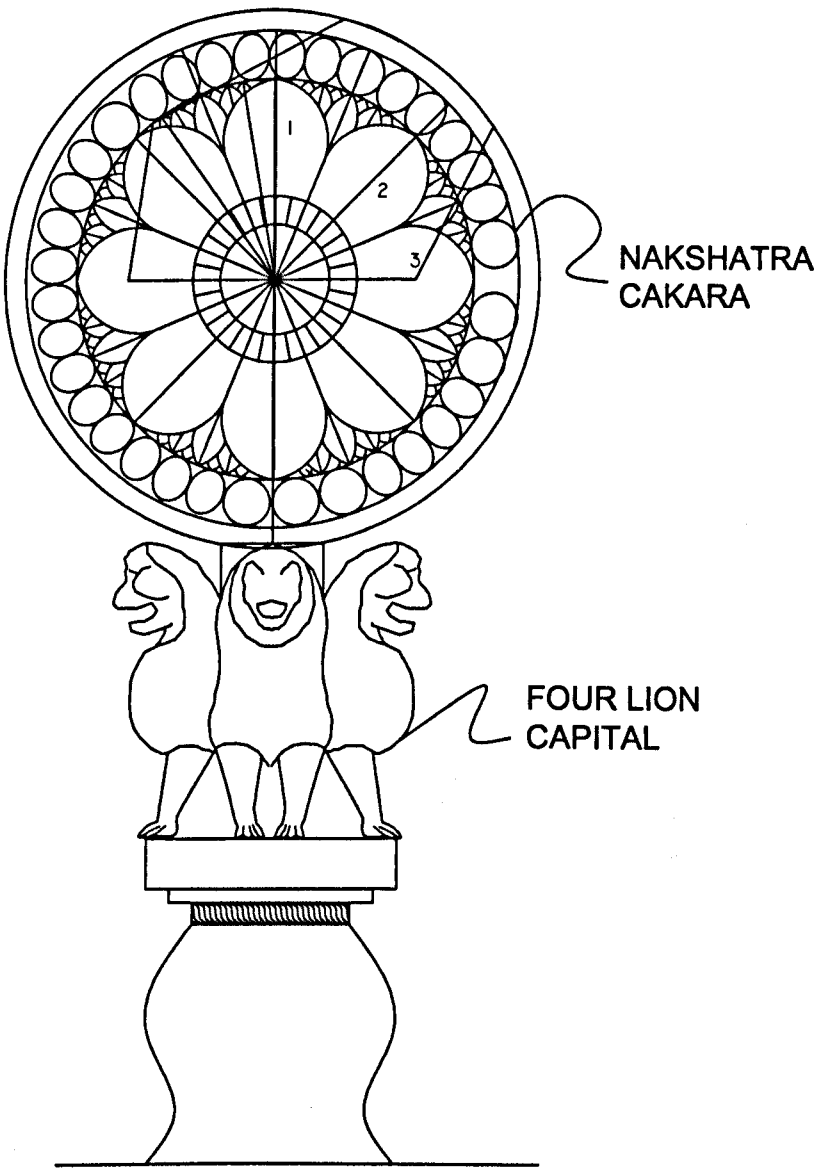
		NOS.	TOTAL LENGTH
A:	13	1	67
B:	12		
C:	12		
D:	36		

SECTION OF COPING (FG14-18)

53

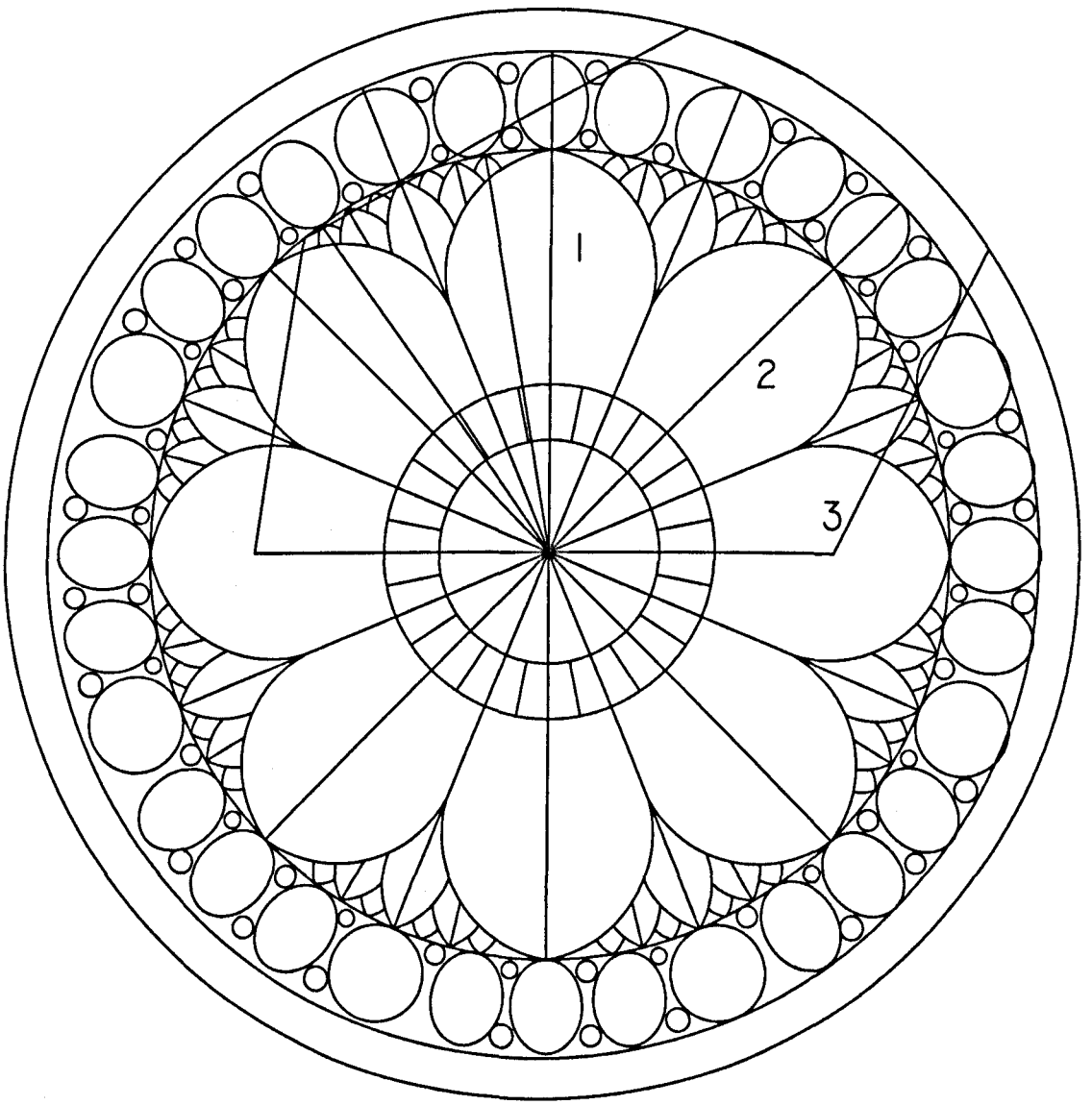
MAP NO.

TEMPLE (N.H.)



ELEVATION

4-LION CAPITAL & NAKSHATRA CAKRA	54
PILLAR IN FRONT OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI RECONSTRUCTION	MAP NO.

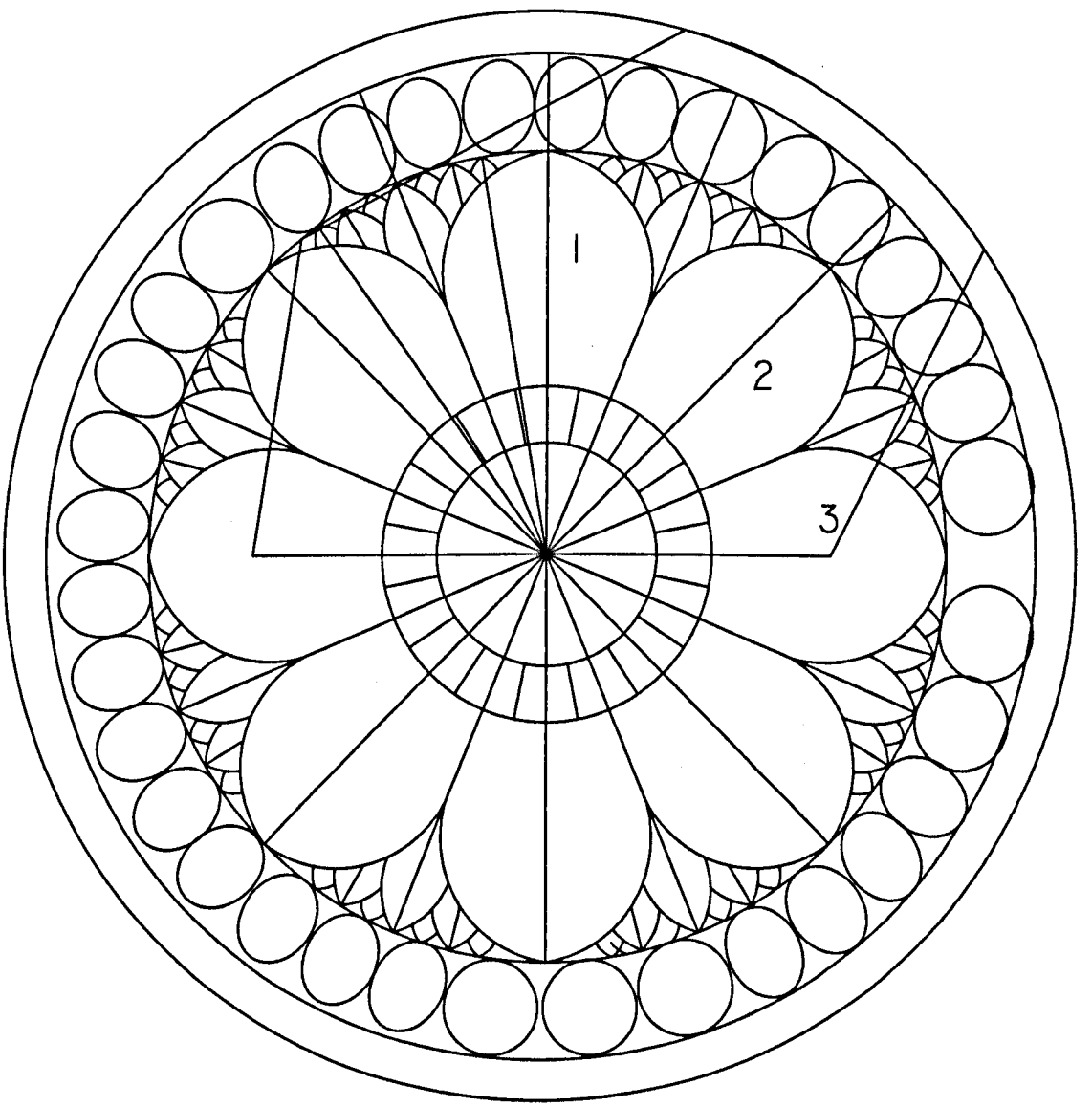


NAKSHATRA CAKRA FG-20 (OPTION-1)

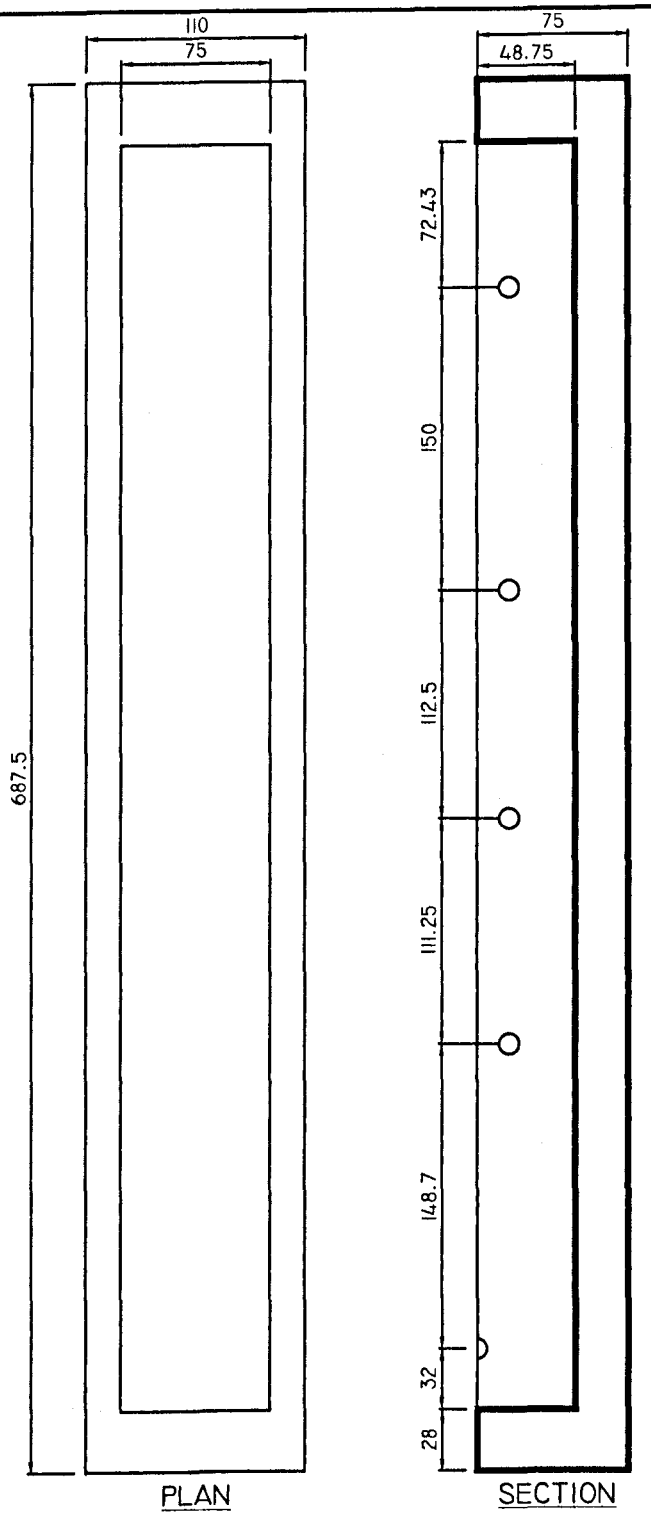
55

PILLAR IN FRONT OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI
RECONSTRUCTION

MAP NO.



NAKSHATRA CAKRA FG-20 (OPTION-2)	56
PILLAR IN FRONT OF TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI RECONSTRUCTION	MAP NO.

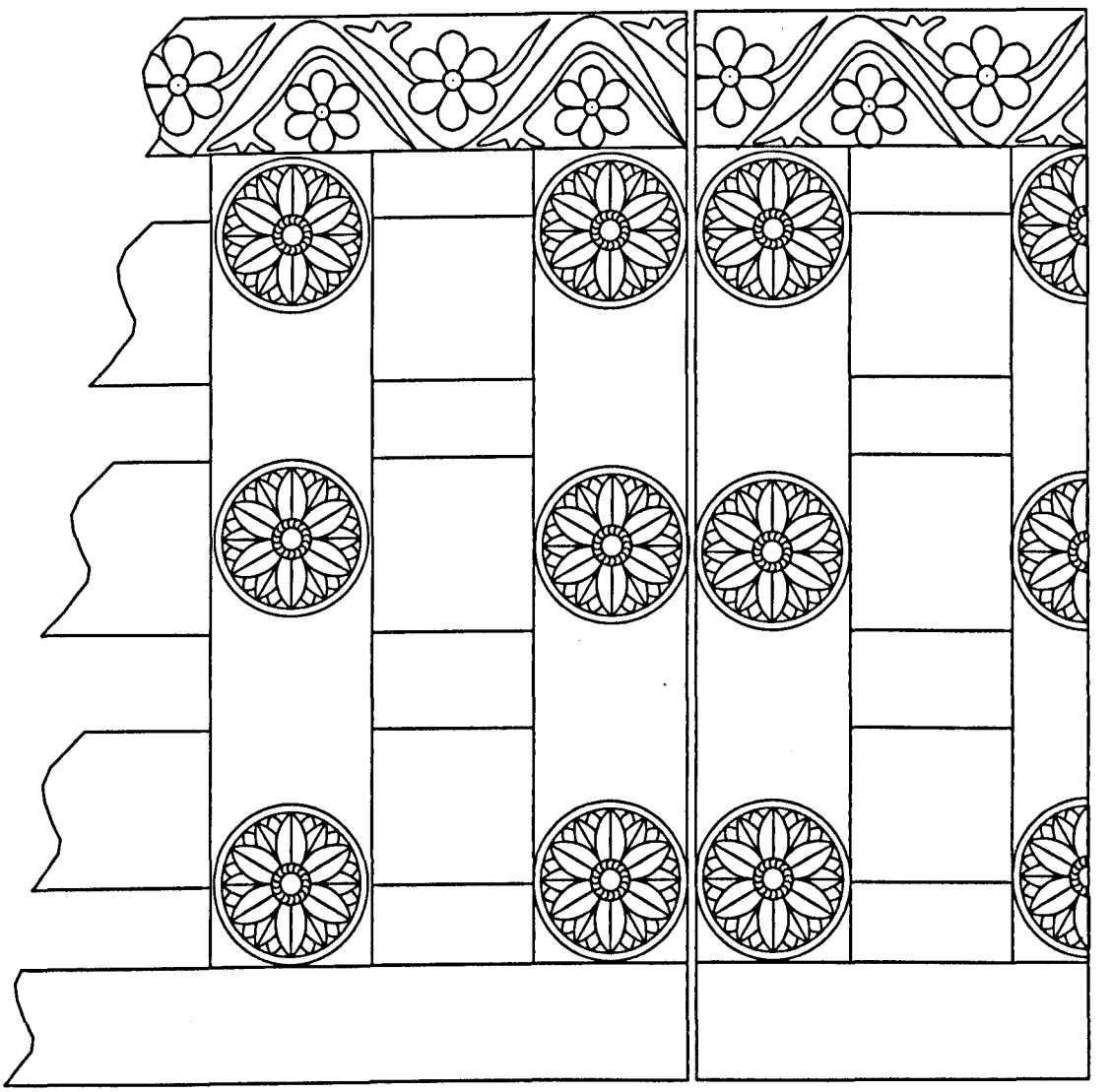


WATER CISTERN

TEMPLE (N.H.) UDAYAGIRI

57

MAP NO.



ELEVATION SIDE A

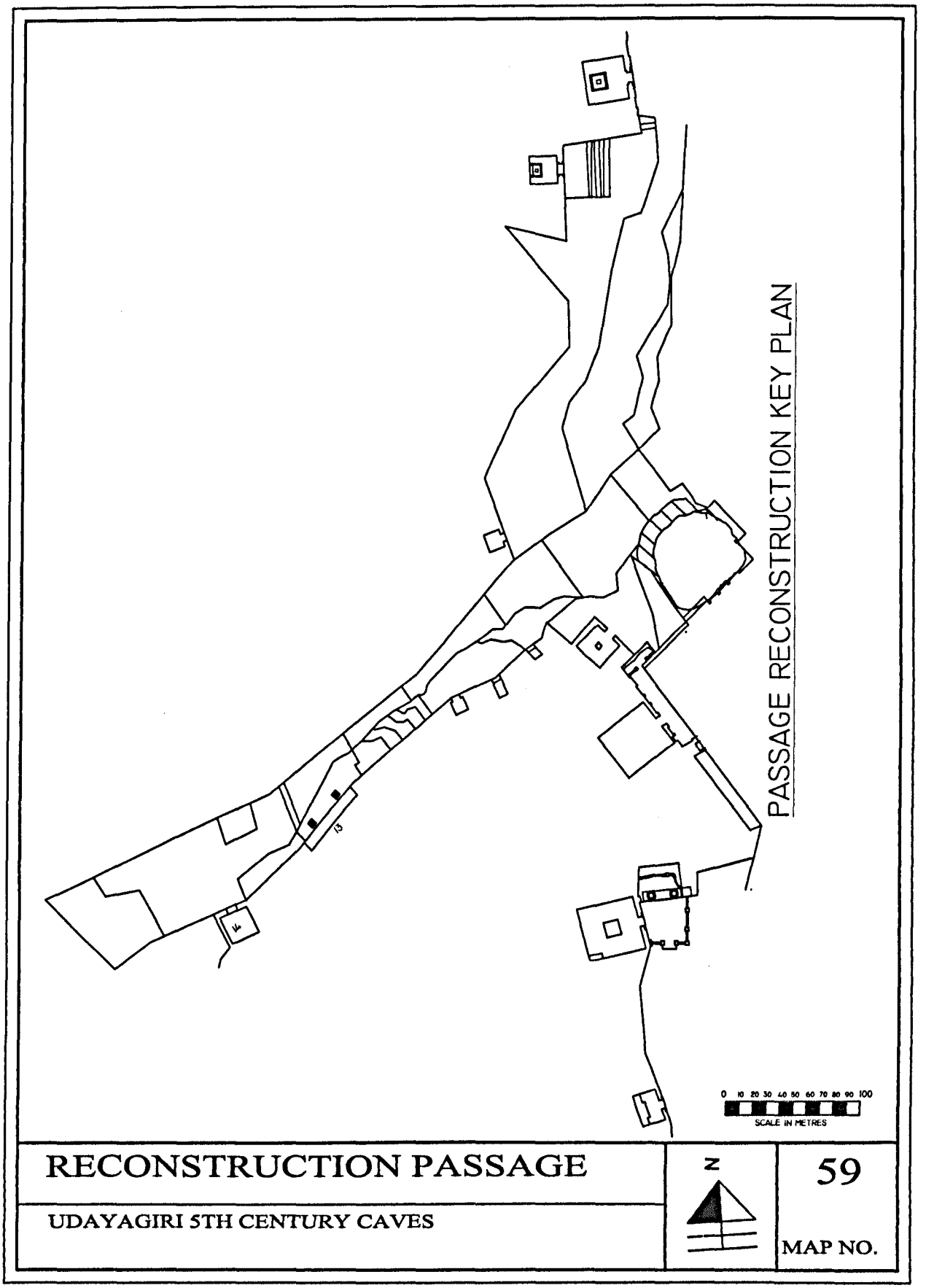
ELEVATION SIDE B

ABACUS OF CAPITAL

58

MAP NO.

UDAYAGIRI - PARK TOWARDS THE WEST



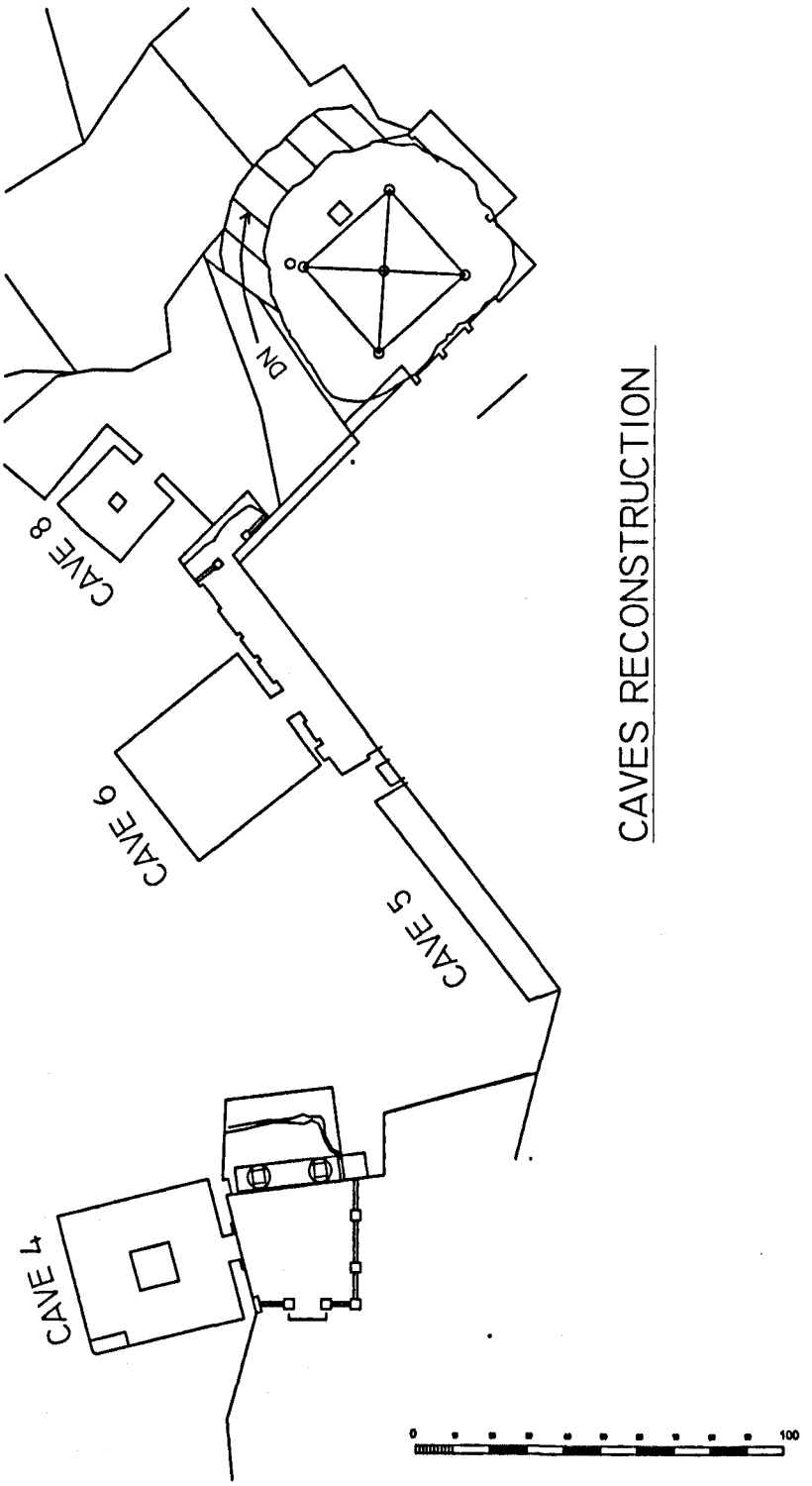
RECONSTRUCTION PASSAGE

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

N

59

MAP NO.



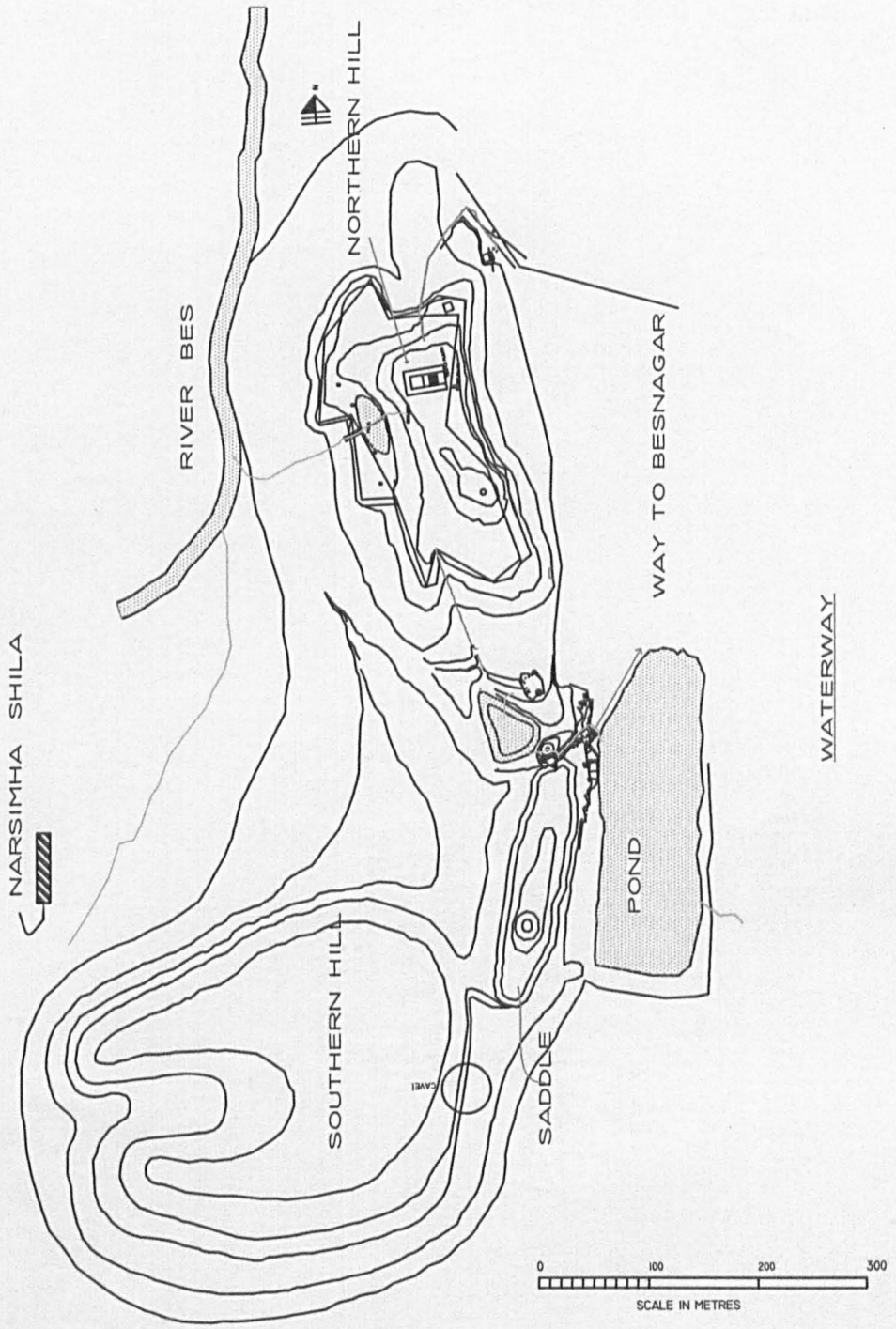
RECONSTRUCTION PASSAGE DT.

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

N

60

MAP NO.



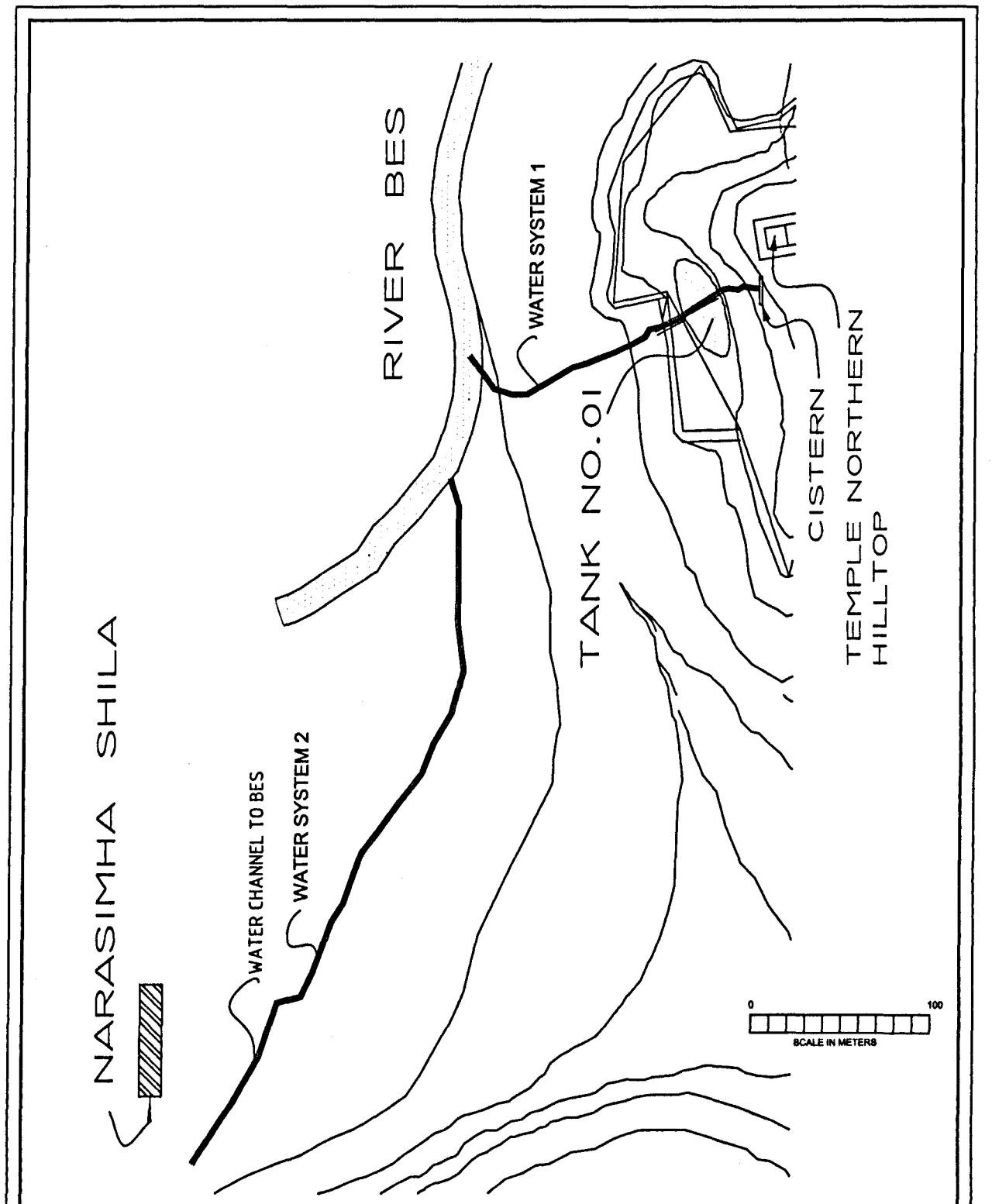
WATER SYSTEMS

UDAIGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

N

61

MAP NO.

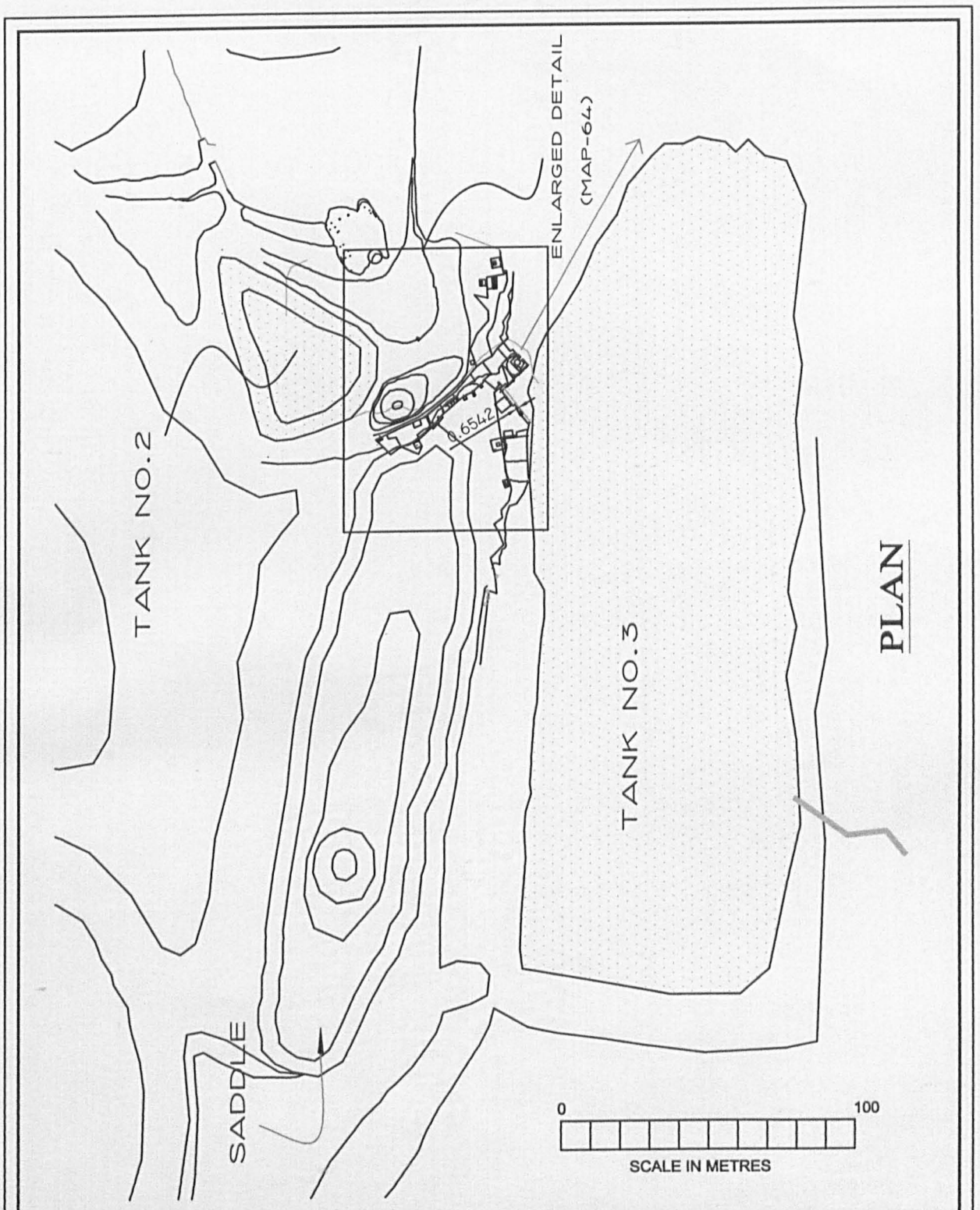


WATER SYSTEM 1&2

UDAIGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

62

MAP NO.



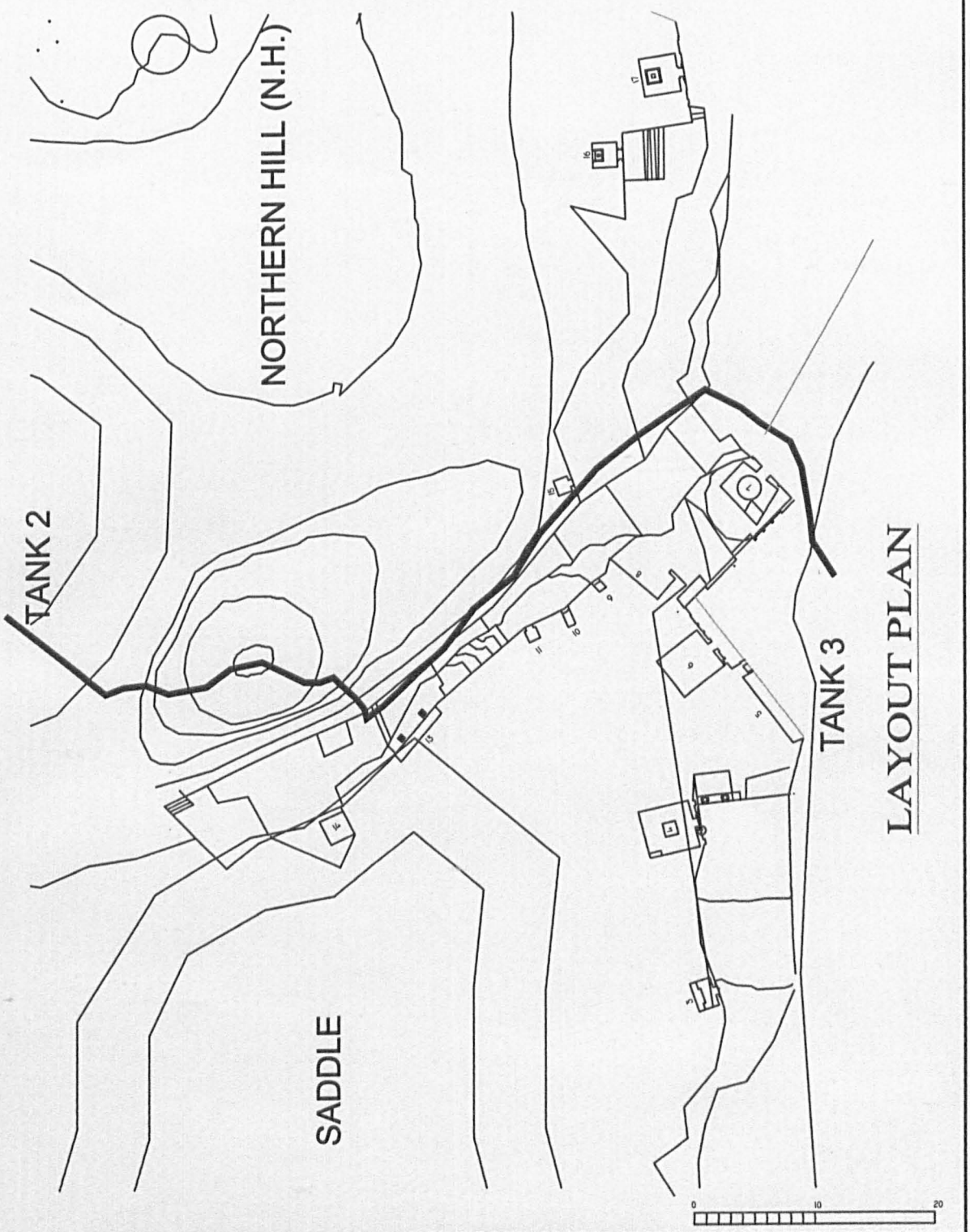
WATER SYSTEM-03

UDAIGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

N

63

MAP NO.

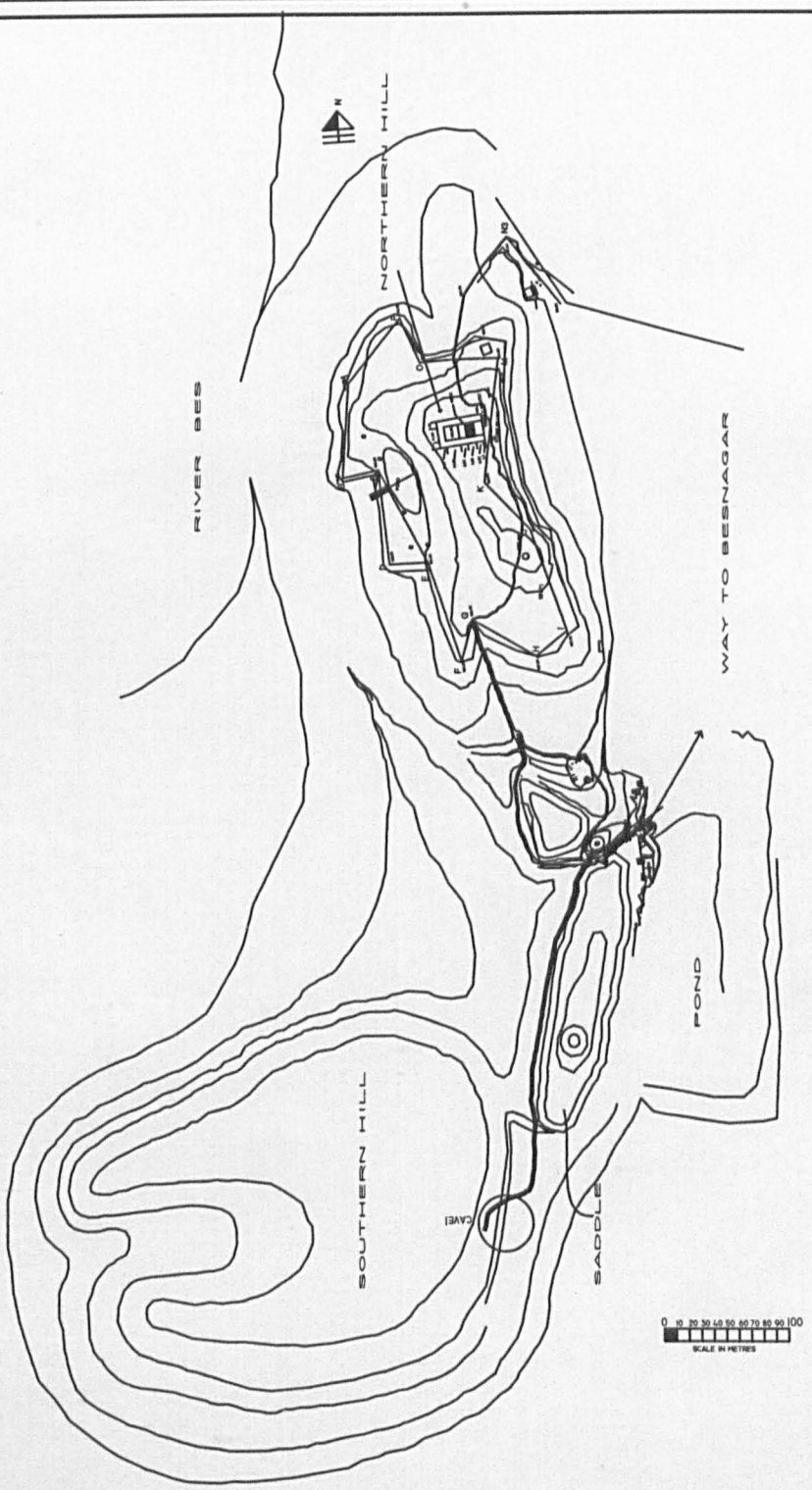


WATER SYSTEM-03 (PASSAGE)

UDAIGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

64

MAP NO.



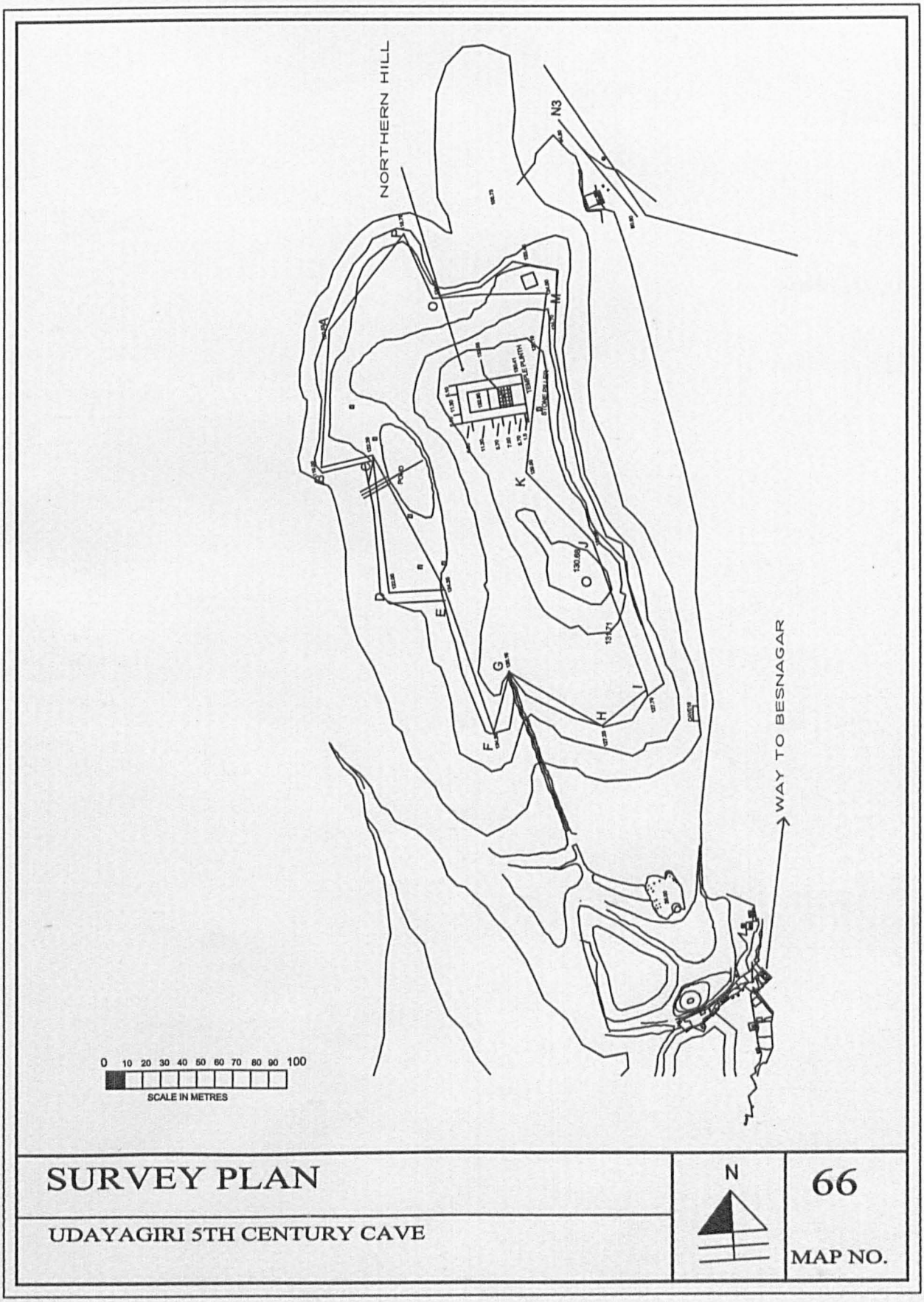
PATHWAY

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVES

N

65

MAP NO.



SURVEY PLAN

UDAYAGIRI 5TH CENTURY CAVE

66

MAP NO.